

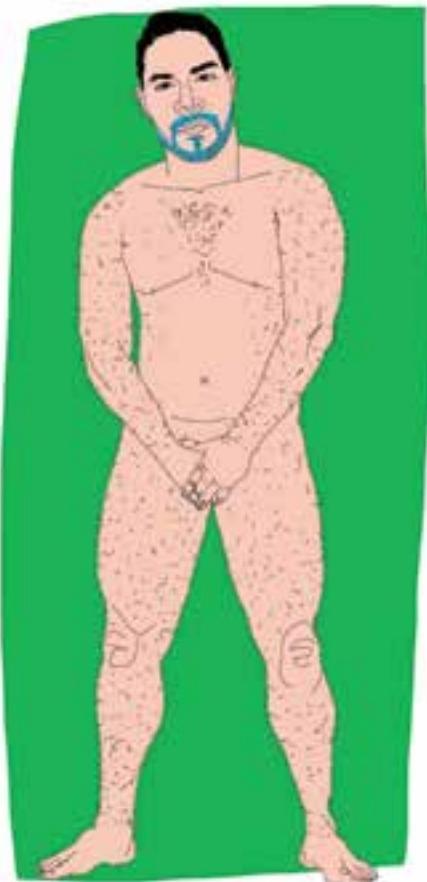
the Stranger

QUEER ISSUE

THERE'S A FIRST TIME FOR EVERYTHING! **MY FIRST TIME...**

... POSING NAKED P. 13

By Manuel Betancourt



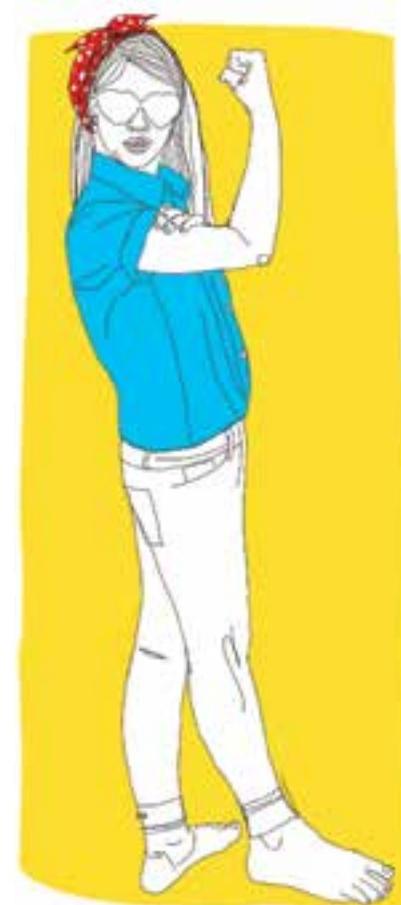
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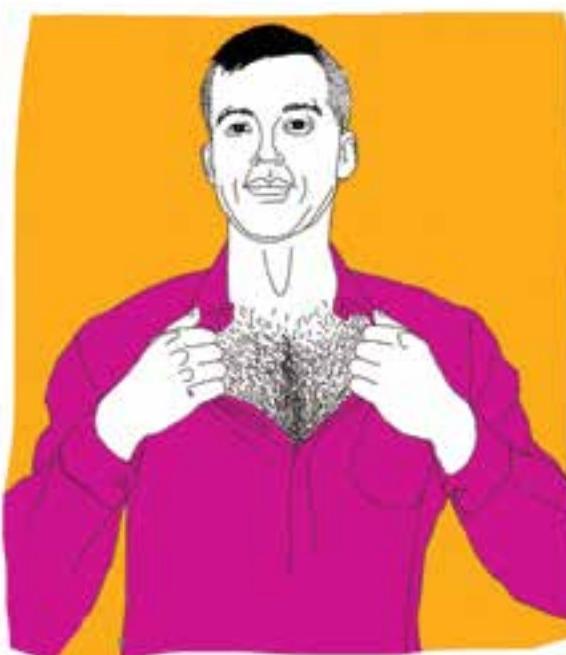
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MATT BAUME, WANCY YOUNG CHO, DANA
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QUEER ISSUE 2017

MY FIRST TIME

There's a First Time for Everything... Especially When You're Queer

"Tell me about your first time..." Three big firsts leap to mind when you ask a queer person about their "first time." The first time they realized they were queer (that stranger's ring of keys), the first person they told (that stranger in a chat room), the first time they had sex (that stranger from a hookup app). But while the big three firsts get all the attention, the firsts keep on coming. There are more firsts in queer life than just "realize," "announce," and "bonk." In fairness to straight people—#StraightLivesMatter—they have their fair share of firsts, too. First crush, first kiss, first fuck. But queer firsts are, well, they're queered by our queerness. Our firsts are experienced more intensely; they're riskier (what if mom and dad throw me out?) and sometimes much more consequential (mom and dad threw me out). Queerness can bend and invert our firsts, and homophobia and transphobia can bugger them up. For this year's Queer Issue (our 23rd!), we asked a diverse group of queer writers to write about a first time—a realization or an epiphany or an experience—that was bound up with their queerness but wasn't one of the big three queer firsts. There are a lot of coming-to-the-realization/coming-out-to-the-family/coming-all-over-yourself stories out there. We wanted to supplement stories of those "firsts" with stories about other less heralded and less explored firsts.

We've got Chase Burns on his first cross-country Instagram date. Alexander Chee on the first—and last—time he dated someone who fetishized him for his race. Wancy Young Cho on his first time living in a gay neighborhood. Shawna Murphy on raising a queer kid for the first time and in the right time and place. Marga Gomez on her first time with a dominatrix (it didn't end quite how you would have imagined). Sarah Galvin writes about her first proposal and counter-proposal, which included poppers and was queer as fuck. Matt Baume writes about the first time he experienced gaydar, and Dave Wheeler the first time he went to a gay bar sober. Other firsts—singing karaoke, masturbating, and breastfeeding—are taken for granted by cis-gender queers, but are transformed into revelatory experiences when you are trans, as Katherine Cross, Buck Angel, and Dana Fried are.

We hope reading these stories reminds our queer readers of the firsts in their lives—and helps them look forward to firsts yet to come—firsts (and thirsts) that deserve to be shared along with the big three. —DAN SAVAGE

the Stranger

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Illustrations by LOUISA BERTMAN
louisabertman.com

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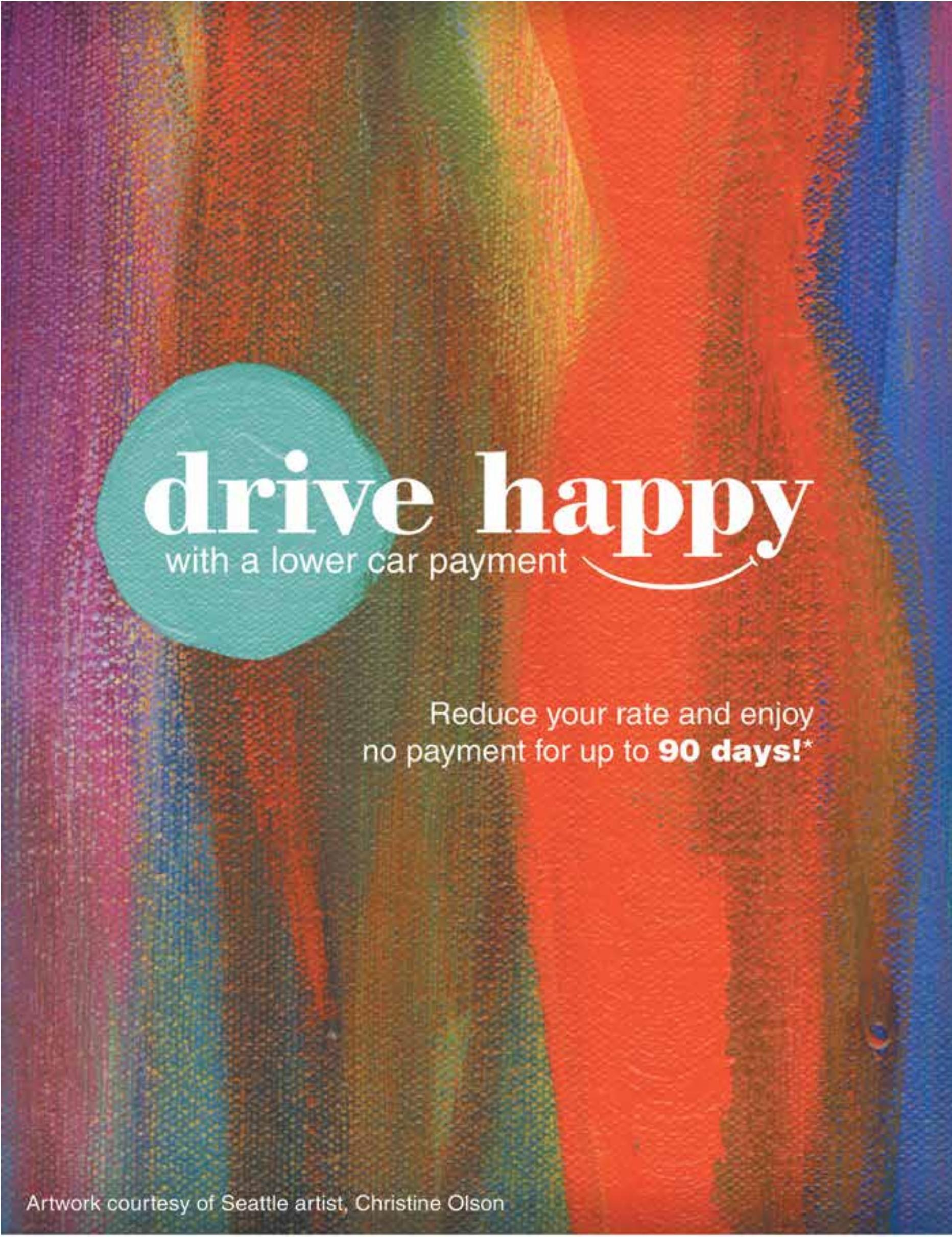
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QUEER ISSUE

My First Time... Everything's My First Time, I'm a 13-Year-Old Lesbian

BY BEEZUS MURPHY

The first time I told my parents I was gay.

I was like 9. Sorry, no Lifetime movie moments here. I can't even remember how it went down.

The first time I accidentally told the entire middle school I was gay.

I told one person, and they told one person, and they told another person. By the time lunch was over, everybody knew. The next day, the middle school held a meeting about my orientation and everybody treated me like I had only six weeks to live. Even the most popular girl was nice to me.

The first time I told a straight girl I had a crush on her during a class field trip.

Well, let's just say I don't plan on doing that again anytime soon.

The first time I heard that Mike Pence thinks that I should have my gay electrocuted out of me.

I fought back with a little humor in my first political essay, where I referred to him and the "president" as Turd in Pants.

The first time I went to PrideFest.

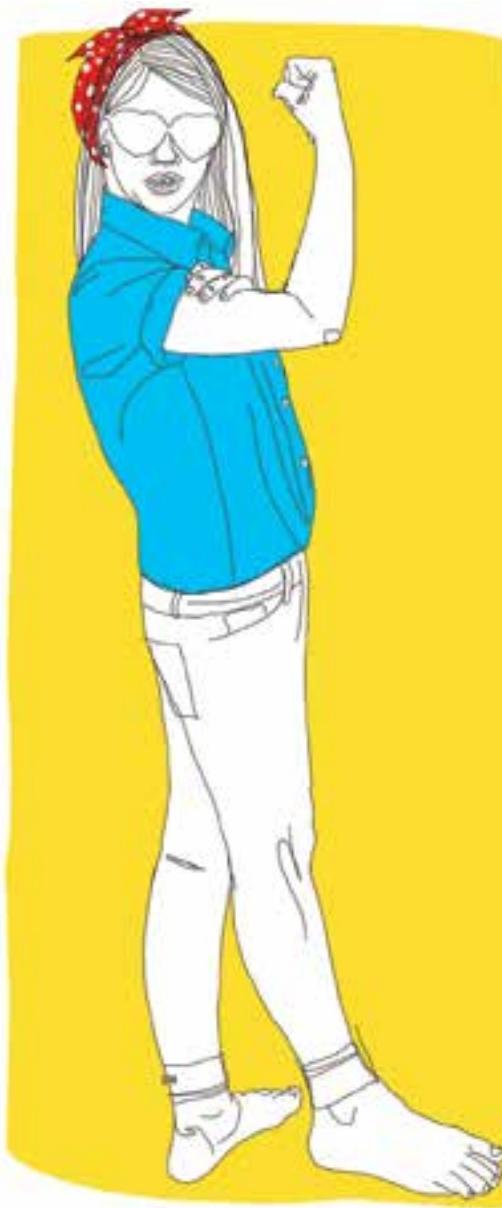
It was last summer, and I got to go backstage and meet my drag idol, RainBowGore Cake. PrideFest overall was awesome, until, on the way out, my family and I ran into a bunch of gay-hating religious freaks holding super-offensive signs like "Jesus died to save you from hell!" I was pretty shocked. I didn't know there were people out there who thought this way.

The first time I went to a super homo pool party.

There was this one really pretty younger married lesbian couple. When I see happily married gay couples, it makes me feel really nice, whether it be our neighbors, friends of my parents, or even classmates' parents I've never met in person.

The first time I ever got set up with the only other gay girl my age that anyone knew.

She actually turned out to be really nice, and we became good friends. Heck, we even got to go on a Chinese food first (friend) date together. I'm not just going to instantly fall in love with the first other lesbian I meet—I'm just like any other 13-year old girl. ■



LOUISA BERTMAN

My First Time Raising a Girl-Crazy Middle-School Baby Dyke

BY SHAWNA MURPHY

My first time is now.

Even when she was a baby, she was cool. We named her Beezus Bedelia. She was wild. She was smart and she was funny. She was always the kind of kid who would say anything, do anything, talk to anyone. No fear. No shame. I remember her first time getting her photo taken with Santa at 2 1/2, and she just sashayed right up to him and remarked, "Santa, you work at Nordstrom," in a devilish drawl. Or at 3, when she got up to tell a joke on the microphone at a burlesque circus show. "What time is it when an elephant sits on your fence?" "Time to get a new fence."

I never questioned this coolness. It was always one of my favorite qualities, especially how she never acted stupid around boys or men. I attributed this to her next-level status, until I finally realized that this was because she did sometimes act very stupid around women and girls.

When she was 9, we were watching *American Idol* one night and she said, "Mom, I forgot the word, but what do you call it when you're a girl who wants to marry girls?"

Lesbian.

She laughed. "Yeah, I'm a lesbian. I know from watching all those Victoria's Secret commercials!" It was my turn to laugh.

Having been socialized in such a heterosexist way, once my daughter was born, it didn't even occur to me that she wouldn't be straight. This is not to say that I, or her father, ever had an issue with her being gay, I just

hadn't thought about it before. When she told us, I wondered if I would be sad about her not having boyfriends, and then about five minutes later I realized not having to worry about boyfriends is probably every mother's dream come true. I can't tell you how many people have made trite comments over the years to her father and me about all the boys who will be heartbroken over her—little did they know.

I worried that I would miss out on the shared experience of liking boys. Like, some silly idea of bonding over hot movie stars or boy bands, but what I really wanted was to find a way to stay connected.

Because I had already been a professional child-care provider for 15 years when I became a mom, I knew what kind of a parent I wanted to be—a mix of authentic and intentional. In being intentional about being the straight mother of a lesbian child, the first impulse for me was to pay attention to her clothes. I started making different style choices when shopping for her, a little edgier; a little more black. Haircuts seemed more important. When her underarm hair grew in last year, I didn't want her to feel like she had to conform to any particular or convoluted beauty ideals but also realized my body was the one she was most used to seeing naked, so I grew out my underarm hair for the first time since I started shaving in 1983. Now we have a lot of fun together flashing our hairy pits. It's a nice intersection for an aging feminist and a 13-year-old baby dyke.

Mostly, though, I just wanted to make sure

that whomever my daughter might long-term partner up with someday, maybe marry and raise children with, is growing up in a supportive house and a safe community just like my daughter is. This is the part that chokes me up. I always tell my daughter that she was born in the best family, best city, and best time to grow up gay, but what if her future wife is growing up somewhere else, somewhere where people don't just laugh or shudder when they hear the evil-isms spouted by Mike Pence and his loony ilk?

Beezus thinks a lot about being gay, too. All the time, really. Sometimes when we have a quiet moment cuddling up reading or watching a show, she confides in me. She asks me theoretical questions about future girlfriends and sex.

The way she looks at adult gay women, really studies them, fascinates me. I've noticed her gaydar is *on* now, and I like it when she enters a party and makes a beeline to our lesbian friends first, always hugging them as if they were her aunties. I gently remind her what these aunties went through and how happy it makes them to see her live her life right out in the open. My lesbian neighbor who works as a therapist likes to joke about it: "Oh, I'm sorry," she says when she sees Beezus, "your daughter won't get to grow up with shame and guilt about her orientation."

I like to sass back that the way things are going, her services will no longer be needed. It's not true (yet), but Beezus gives me hope. ■

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QUEER ISSUE

My First (and Last) Time Dating a Rice Queen

BY ALEXANDER CHEE

On one of our first dates—we lasted for about two weeks in July of 1998—we met up in New York's West Village for dinner.

I walked West 11th Street to get here, he said. Do you think it's out of our reach, to live there?

My heart caught in my ribs. Oh, I said, without explaining. It's not out of our reach. It's our destiny. He seemed to accept this. We were both drunk.

For a long time, living on West 11th was my dream—and while its power over me came from Grace Paley having lived there, the brick buildings were low, so there was beautiful light, and from Fifth Avenue to the Hudson Highway, these beautiful rooms full of books and art suggested lives that mesmerized me as I walked by. One of my very favorite writers once did me the compliment of naming someone in one of her stories, published in the *New Yorker*, after me—and giving him a home on West 11th. The closest I will ever get to this dream.

I think it was this moment that pierced me, but there were many, really. He was that sort of dangerous beauty with a knack for knowing just what I dreamed about.

K__ was a young professor at a university there in New York, tall and handsome, white with bright blue eyes. In retrospect I should have guessed: He reminded me of a friend from college who had studied Chinese and Korean, practiced Chinese calligraphy, trained in tae kwon do, and dated Korean women almost exclusively. A friend who'd once said to me, I'm half-Korean, too. Just, inside.

They had the same color eyes, the same twinkle, too, and while K__ was six foot four, about six inches taller than my friend, they could have been brothers.

On one of our first dates, he came over to my apartment and told me about the books I'd just been given by my grandfather, the *jokbo* for our family. I'm the oldest male in my generation, the 42nd, and by Korean tradition, we are given them. The books are kept in an antiquated Chinese script, and I am unable to read them, but he could read them. It was the sort of thing that shamed me regularly for the sort of upbringing I'd had—my father had committed us to assimilation and had not wanted us to speak Korean. He had died when I was young, though, and the language gap left us estranged from his family afterward. In 1998, we were putting these connections back together—I had just gone to Korea with my family that summer, and my grandfather had given me these books. But there was still so much no one had ever taught me.

Here's how you write your last name, K__ said that afternoon, as we sat with these books, and then he showed me. I practiced it as he watched and corrected me.

I have a very funny record in my diaries of a dream I had just before the end of us.

July 19, 1998

Roses re-emerging all through the garden. From here I can see the cats have broken off the top of the poor non-blooming QE [Queen Elizabeth]. I think it's cursed there, that rose.

Had a strange dream that K__



LOUISA BERTMAN

had ordered a steak medium rare and there I was, annoyed.

There's no record anywhere of what I can now see the dream was about: a moment when, in walking through his apartment, I found a photo of him and an ex of his from his studies in Japan, a beautiful Japanese boy.

Are you a rice queen? I asked, joking.

Yes, he said.

This startled me. I was pretty sure you were at least supposed to lie about this.

I knew what rice queens were, and they didn't usually go for me. When I

worked at A Different Light bookstore in the Castro in 1990s-era San Francisco, I remember selling them copies of OG magazine—short for "Oriental Guy"—these men fantasizing about the sex trips they took to Asian countries like the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, all of them in search of smooth young Asian men living

in precarious economic conditions who were willing to do things sexually for, well, probably less than the cost of the magazine, in order to survive.

I had also been to the gay bars in San Francisco for Asian men, to discover they were for

Asian men looking for white men and vice versa. As someone who was half, I was just exactly not enough of what each type wanted—exactly enough to be invisible to them or at least not eligible as desirable. They still walk by me sometimes, these mixed Asian and white gay couples, and I smile as both men seem to project their insecurities on to me,

holding hands a little tighter as they walk by.

Even if it is only true half the times it happened, it is still funny.

As a result, I gave up on the idea that I would ever end up dating either kind of man—the gay white man who liked Asian men was likely not ever going to ask me out.

I remember dancing with a white man once at a club, and he reached over and pulled my shirt front down to reveal my hairy chest. He looked shocked and then turned and left the dance floor, not even a good-bye, like I'd lied to him about the goods. I didn't expect any of this from K__.

I like Asian men, he said, after this confession. It's why I lived in Japan, why I studied Japanese.

I tried to imagine it. Having an erotic imagination so focused on one race of people. All that my ex-boyfriends had in common was me.

Questions I didn't ask ran through my head. Were you even gay if this is what your sexuality was? What was your sexuality if it was based on race and not gender preference? Especially if you were white?

We just broke up, he said. I understood then he was on the rebound.

He vanished after that conversation. We never spoke again. In retrospect, I think he was letting himself out of the relationship by saying these things. Either way, I think we both knew, after my question and his answer, that there was nothing further for us.

I left him some phone messages, none of which he returned. I don't know if he worked things out with his Japanese ex-boyfriend or what; I recall checking on him at that university and seeing at some point he had been given tenure. Now when I look for him, there's no sign of him.

The diary entry I have for the dream is written on the back of a letter I never sent him.

It's hard for me to say what it meant to me, the time you spent looking over my family books. I'm writing to my grandfather this afternoon and will write the character on the envelope, and even pray for a little of my grandmother's calligraphy talent. Thank you for the primer on my family; until now, everything I knew about them came from their mouths. As I face making a new relationship with them, which is what the last year has meant, this was a real help, a wonderful surprise.

It's still the weirdest gift of that time, that he told me about me in a way no one else was able to tell me then. I at least have the sense to be grateful for that. Grateful, even, that he drove me away.

K__, if you're reading this, consider the letter sent. ■

**HE REACHED OVER
AND PULLED MY SHIRT
FRONT DOWN TO REVEAL
MY HAIRY CHEST. HE
LOOKED SHOCKED AND
THEN TURNED AND LEFT
THE DANCE FLOOR, NOT
EVEN A GOOD-BYE, LIKE
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QUEER ISSUE

My First Time Experiencing Gaydar

BY MATT BAUME

I could see Bill's* eyes tracking mine in brief furtive glimpses between scrolling lines of green code.

We were 12 years old and seated next to each other at a beige school computer in homeroom. We'd started talking that October, never looking at each other when we did, for no other reason than the alphabetizing that seated us at the same table.

All preteens are ridiculous pupae, and his particular affliction was that he looked perpetually sullen and pouty, perhaps because his face was composed primarily of cheeks. As for myself, I pulled my socks up too high and talked like a tiny Carl Sagan. None of the other boys in the class could make any sense of us, and we made none of them.

Bill disliked everything, and I was disliked by almost everyone.

Most mornings, we'd sit at the computer, him describing video games he wanted to play and me doing my best to program them with my limited knowledge of BASIC. In 15-minute increments over the course of a year, we built a rudimentary dialogue-branching computer game.

The story was about two wilderness explorers, connected only by intermittent radio signals as they attempt to rescue each other in a hostile forest. There is obviously no deeper psychological meaning to our collaborative arrival upon this storyline.

Our interactions stay with me because they felt so furtive and heart-pounding. I was used to being socially unhappy; I was, after all, president of the computer club, an organization that under my stewardship became dedicated to the strenuous avoidance of human contact. As far as I was concerned, terror was simply to be expected as a normal part of any conversation. But I felt a new alarm at our exchange: We were like two rabbits who had just sensed the rumble of a tractor over their den.

It was my first time experiencing gaydar, and I was baffled. What was this strange new sensory input? It wasn't quite friendship and wasn't quite attraction—it was a sort of sad sympathy, an understanding of living outside of what boys ought to be. It was as though we each carried a magnet we'd never noticed before, and were still unable to locate and name.

I had no idea then what it meant to be gay, or what it meant to feel kinship with another who was befuddled by gender. But I knew what it was to be afraid of those things.

There are only three times that I can recall Bill's eyes meeting mine. The first time was as I coded, catching the glint of his eyes looking past the screen's green text into mine.

The second time was right before he attacked me, five years later.

Once we were adrift in high school, Bill and I discovered cause for mutual disgust. He managed to unscramble the rules of teen masculinity with the help of some new sports-oriented friends who did not much care for me.

They might have been surprised to learn that I disliked myself nearly as much as they did. Their distaste reminded me of my own self-loathing, only they were freed of the misfortune of actually having to be me.

I often wondered if I reminded Bill of himself.

We did not speak much after choosing our high school tribes. His people fashioned armor out of football gear and muscle; my group guarded ourselves with ironic detachment. Once, crossing paths in an empty



THE STRANGER

hallway, I thought we might exchange words; instead, he slapped the books out of my hands and kept walking. That was probably the only interaction we had for the entirety of 10th grade.

Because of our last names, we were often placed in the same required courses. In gym class, he boasted to friends about how he was building muscle. I still didn't know much about what it meant to be gay, but I knew what it was to crave the attention of men. I

still felt the pull of the magnet in that moment—the pull that I'd felt for the first time sitting next to him in homeroom and was increasingly noting when around other boys. I'll never know if he felt it from me, or if the force had grown repulsive to him, or if his field had faded altogether.

Meanwhile I cultivated a pastiche of fruitcakery. He wore football uniforms to school, and I would shake my head and think, "What on earth could possess a person," while carefully protecting my painted nails.

"Why are your nails painted?" asked one of the other boys in the locker room one day.

"I just like it," I said.

"Are you gay?" he said.

"Yes, but that's not why," I said, for some insane reason that I can't even begin to explain.

I saw Bill's head snap around at the far end of the locker room. It was a long, curious stare, disbelief with a hint of a smile, that I recognized as eager and hopeful from five years of distance. Then his friends moved toward me, and he joined them, once again avoiding eye contact.

There's nothing quite like having a dedicated group of abusers, especially when you're perfectly capable of feeling ugly without any help from them. The only thing more

dispiriting than being informed by a football team that they don't care for your fagoty mincing is being informed by way of their fists.

Toward the end of my junior year, I got a little better at interpreting my gaydar's magnetic pull. There was a boy in the music program who loved

Kate Mulgrew and attempted to give me a makeover, and another in drama club who shared my interest in massages.

At a parents-out-of-town house party that spring, I sat next to one of my friends on a bed. We'd spent the evening darting our eyes at each other and then away and then back, and eventually a girl on the lacrosse team who knew more about us than we knew about ourselves grew sick of this standoff and shoved us into a bedroom. By then, I'd come to recognize the signal of furtive gazes and of alliances

with girls that never led to romance, but I didn't know what to do about it.

As the party careened around us, we inched closer and closer, then rested heads on shoulders, then turned our faces for a kiss.

Now I knew.

A few years ago, a high school friend e-mailed with the news of Bill. He was speeding, and news articles mentioned an elevated blood alcohol level at the time of his death.

This was the third time I can recall our eyes meeting, and it was again through a computer screen. There was an image of Bill alongside the article, and although I hadn't spoken to him in over a decade, I immediately recalled in his eyes the conversations I wished we'd had.

I didn't know him—certainly not as a man, and not much further beyond the 12-year-old boy.

I do feel certain that we shared a sympathy of some form, and then later a harsh discord. We were boys searching for our place among boys, and although we grew more separated with every passing year—first by lines of code, then the tense air of the locker room, and eventually the yawn of death—he was the first to help me to understand my place among men. He was the first to direct me, from a vast distance, toward feelings of affection. He was my first hint that someone might return my signal in the wilderness—inexact, obscure, and imprecise until the moment of a kiss. ■

* His name and a few minor identifying details have been changed.

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QUEER ISSUE

My First Time Posing Naked

It Stirred Up More Feelings—and Was More Erotic—Than I Expected

BY MANUEL BETANCOURT

The shirt comes off easily. As do the pants. And the socks, I guess. I just pretend I'm in a locker room, about to hit the showers at the gym. But once I get down to the briefs, there is a moment of hesitation. A fluttering of anticipation. Once those are gone, there will be nothing left to hide. That small moment when I tug at my briefs and take them off, a moment I've always associated with either total privacy or total intimacy, suddenly feels all too new.

There is a performed awkwardness to what follows. But John has done all of this before. I contacted him because I wanted to commission a piece for my boyfriend. Our three-year anniversary is coming up, and in my head a nude portrait is a playfully erotic wink of a gift. What is another bare ass, another (mostly) limp dick? His watercolor studies of well-sculpted naked men in everyday poses (lying in bed, sitting sideways, standing and staring), which I first saw online, have an alluring mix of raw sensuality and tender vulnerability. I was drawn to the pieces themselves for their own striking qualities, but was also intrigued by the scenarios they suggested, by the fabricated intimacy between a gay artist and a male model—to erotic to be utterly chaste, too demure to be outright sexual.

After working on a number of warm-up ballpoint sketches, John is now at work on one of two watercolors he will paint of me today. My arms, both of which have been behind my head for more than 20 minutes, are aching. As the sun begins to flood the space, I feel sweat slowly build up on my lower back. At least I don't have to worry about sweat stains. Since all I'm required to do is stay still, I let my wavering and wandering mind loose, trying to make sense of the odd scene I'm now a part of, standing naked in an area of town full of bustling office buildings, these wide windows to my left framing the city's skyline.

The eerie stillness makes it all seem more illicit than it should. Not illicit, I guess—titillating. As I survey the room around me and try to clear my mind, I land on a line from one of my favorite poets: "I am what people make of me—if they can and when they will." Frank O'Hara's greatest gift was the way he captured the immediacy of life. The lustful gaze that runs through his poetry all but demands you shed any shame you may have—about loving Lana Turner or wanting to fuck that cute guy you just met. His poems may seem like candid Polaroids, but come to think of it, they're closer to the swift-if-detailed watercolors John can create in 20 minutes.

In that same poem, O'Hara (who would often pose for his artist friend Larry Rivers)

writes that he's so glad Larry has made a statue of him:

and now I hear that my penis is on all
the statues of all the young sculptors
who've
seen it

More of us should aspire to be as gleefully vain as O'Hara is here and embrace the openness he embodied on and off the page. (Suddenly I regret not having thought to bring a pair of boots to re-create Rivers's own *O'Hara Nude with Boots*, a painting I realize John and I are inadvertently echoing with my current pose.)

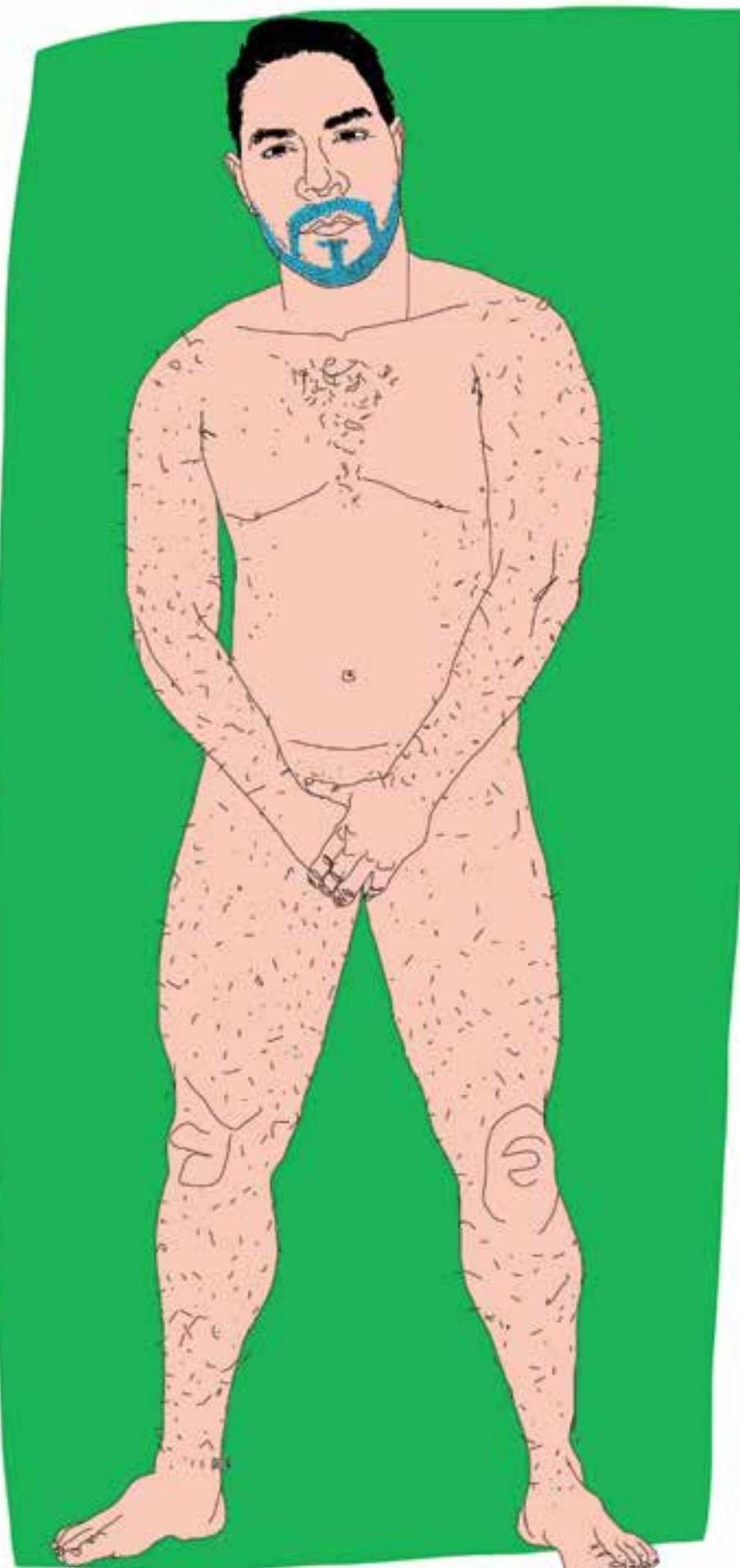
Worried, perhaps, that I'm too caught up in my own thoughts ("You're so still," he says), John tries to put me at ease, striking up a conversation about the nature of the commission, telling me how he's painted several couples in the past to celebrate similar milestones. He knows the portrait will be a surprise and, with a wide grin, asks, "What do you think your boyfriend will think of this?"

The question catches me off

guard and I struggle to answer it. "I don't know," I muster. The hesitancy comes from a place of, I must admit, shame. No, here what haunts me is shame's Spanish equivalent: *pudor*. It's apt not only because it's the language of my family and my homeland, but because it's one letter away from *sudor* (sweat). It's a visceral reaction. Something deep in me wants to tarnish what feels all too natural (*au naturel*, I can't help but think to myself). Of course, as a thirtysomething gay man living in a big city, the very thought of feeling shame at displaying my body so unabashedly in a decidedly private environment strikes me as timid at best and prudish at worst. Neither comforts me.

The more I think about it, the more this morning's session with John feels like a bumbling attempt at unpacking what I really wanted this gift to mean, to say, to stand for. On first look it seems rather self-serving. Narcissistic even. A carefully orchestrated scenario to indulge in what may very well be an exhibitionist streak I've long tried to repress. Yet at the same time, posing for a nude portrait necessarily requires vulnerability, giving up control. It's about letting go of your own sense of self and letting someone else reveal it for you.

John dips his brush in more water and continues his work, letting his question



LOUISA BERTMAN

linger. Occasionally our eyes meet and I find myself blushing—all the more apparent and embarrassing in my current state, especially since I notice blood rushing somewhere else. Did he mean "this" as in "spending your Saturday morning naked with some 'john,'" or "this" as in "gifting him a seemingly vanity-driven nude portrait"? As I continue treating our time together as a sort of self-searching meditation session, he eventually looks up and tells me that he's finished. Outside, the sun is shining, and I am oddly melancholy about putting my clothes back on.

John shows me the final watercolor, the one I'll later frame and hang on our wall. It's odd to see oneself amid brushstrokes and lines, seeing every muscle, hair, and mole pointedly looking back at you from

what was once a mere blank page. There may be no boots and no cinder block, but I do enjoy thinking of it as an echo of Rivers's 1954 portrait of his poet friend. Another O'Hara line (from a poem titled "Homosexuality," no less) flits through my head, offering itself up as a sly caption: "It's a summer day, and I want to be wanted more than anything else in the world." But that's too glib. I know my boyfriend, who'll smile and blush and stare in wide-eyed wonder at the portrait when I finally give it to him, wants me. John's brushstrokes need not spell out my desire to be desired by him. No, that glint in my eye he managed to capture is also directed at myself. A reminder of a sunny Saturday morning when I tugged and dropped not just my briefs but my *pudor*. ■

QUEER ISSUE

My First Time Proposing and Being Proposed To

It Was Also My First Time Doing Poppers

BY SARAH GALVIN

When I first visited the Double Header four years ago, I immediately noticed the logging equipment and yellowed photos decorating the walls, but I was a couple beers in before I noticed something familiar about the logging-town-era women in the photos, something I associate with a sense of belonging, and catharsis, and waking up during Pride weekend in an unfamiliar apartment wearing only a mink stole and Sharpie drawings of cocks. These women of yore were drag queens, from an era when drag queens were called "female impersonators," and I had wandered into the oldest continuously operating gay bar on the West Coast.

That night, the clientele seemed mainly to be residents of the Mission shelter across the street, either not in drag or passing very well, but the second time I stopped by it was full of bears. The place's level and flavor of queerness seemed to vary greatly. The night I met Mary Anne, I have no idea who was there besides her. I'd experienced immediate attraction before, usually inspired by

**ACTUALLY, WE BOTH DECIDED TO PROPOSE—
MY FAVORITE IMPROVEMENT QUEERS HAVE MADE TO THE AMERICAN WEDDING TRADITION.**

asses that appear to be violently dominating whatever hopeless garment tries to contain them, but never had that been mixed with awe. I had been actively avoiding dating, and even actively avoiding perfect asses, but this was like a hit-and-run by Venus fleeing a DUI.

In a cape and gold-embroidered pillbox hat, she looked like goth Audrey Hepburn in a John Waters movie. It felt like I was seeing the work of my favorite artist for the first time—which I was; Mary Anne is, among many things, a clothing designer. One after another, she put my favorite songs on the jukebox. When she and her friends got up to leave, I knew I had to approach her, but not what I could possibly say to such a person. The friend I was out with suggested I write her a note, so I wrote, "You have great style and your taste in music is impeccable," on a coaster with my number.

I still think that night we encountered a distillation of the Double Header's decades of queer romance, as if its final drag show suddenly manifested itself as a relationship. To my surprise, Mary Anne texted me later that night saying that she had a partner but that she would like to come to my reading at City Hall the next day. We



LOUISA BERTMAN

quickly discovered everything she does for fun I do for work and vice versa—I write books of poetry, she designed poetry book covers for Ugly Duckling; I explore abandoned buildings, she's the marketing and outreach director of a salvage yard. Both of us consider throwing parties an art form. I posted on Facebook, "I think I just met the girl version of me," and two weeks later she had keys to my apartment.

Gem and Sterling (THEIR REAL NAMES, AAAAH) are a couple of guys who had been happily married for 51 years when they gave me some advice: Don't go out looking for the love of your life, and pay close attention to the way you feel when you first meet anyone. Five or even three years ago I'd

have told you love at first sight is a lie fabricated by Hugh Grant's teeth—but I knew when I saw Mary Anne that if she loved me, I would marry her.

About a year into our relationship, "Will you marry me?" became a question we exchanged at least once a day, and when it was clear both of us really meant it, sometimes also, "Was that the real time?" We decided roughly when we wanted "the real time" to be, and that we *both* wanted to propose (my favorite improvement queers have made to the American wedding tradition).

Both of us love elaborate dates—in the first weeks of our romance, I took her to a rooftop overlooking downtown where we drank Sofia Coppola (the canned pink champagne that

comes with a bendy straw) and listened to Roy Orbison through a shared pair of headphones. She took me on a "Haunted/Holy Date," which involved a Catholic mass, a surprise picnic on the waterfront, a cocktail in a glass skull at the Hideout, and bottle rockets in a tiny park overlooking Lake Washington. That was the best date I've ever been on. Absolutely anything was possible. I wanted my proposal to celebrate that feeling and my hope for its indefinite continuation.

The Double Header shut down about a year after we met. Though it had become one of our favorite bars, we sensed the end approaching. There were rarely more than five other patrons, it often closed at 10 p.m., and the floor-rattling bass from the dance club below drew attention to how quiet the place was. This of course was sad, but the fact that there are places in the world where queer spaces are no longer necessitated by persecution is one of the very few things these days that suggest to me humans are still evolving.

As middle-school teachers, Gem and Sterling didn't even go out to bars when they were young because if they were outed they'd lose their jobs. Mary Anne and I could sit in an Olive Garden squeezing each other's boobs and everyone would just keep eating breadsticks. But that's exactly why we need places like the Double Header and the Eagle—they're places to celebrate our heritage and the people who made our freedom possible.

My excitement when I found out the Double Header had been bought by the owners of another queer drinking hole, Re-bar (the Double Header will soon reopen as a joint called Night Jar), was surpassed only when they agreed to let a bunch of my friends in during the remodel, for my pro-

posal. On the anniversary of the day we met, I took Mary Anne for drinks at the Smith Tower while my friends hid in the dark bar behind the newspapers covering the windows. I was so nervous as we approached that I got a nosebleed. When I tried to get on one knee, I lost control of my legs and flopped onto the ground. As she put on my ring, our friends poured out of the bar throwing flowers and googly eyes and pregnancy tests. My friend Bree distributed witch hats, and somebody passed around a vial of poppers. A guy who'd frequented the Double Header during its heyday said, "This makes me so happy—I haven't smelled poppers outside this place in years." I inhaled a big face-warming hit, taking communion ▶

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WAS I HAVING A STROKE? There was a hot-pink eight-foot-tall inflatable tube man flailing behind her.

◀ in the church of Jean Genet and John Rechy and Eileen Myles, all the brave outlaws and the moldy corners their love set fire to. We drank champagne and shot off bottle rockets and Mary Anne's great-aunt mistook the poppers for flower essences (don't worry, she was fine).

Considering Mary Anne dressed up like Ruth Bader Ginsburg and sprayed me with a Super Soaker of whiskey on my birthday when we'd only known each other a month, I had absolutely no idea what form her proposal would take or when it would happen. Though I thought about it all the time, she still managed to blindside me.

I thought I was going to a *Twin Peaks* viewing party, but when I arrived no one was there but our friends Kevin and Jasmine, who told me Mary Anne went out to get snacks. After a few minutes we heard a roaring sound mixed with faint music. It sounded like a parade going by. "What is that?" said Kevin. "Is it coming from outside?" I'd been to Kevin's many times, but when we got up to investigate the noise I noticed a room of the apartment I had never seen before. I thought it might be a door to the hallway. Was there a party across the hall? All I could see inside were candles and balloon animals. I became convinced that this was either a stroke or the onset of my first ocular migraine. I stepped through the door to find Mary Anne, a hot-pink eight-foot-tall inflatable tube man of the kind often found in used car lots flailing behind her; and a radio playing a kids' brass band rendition of "Mambo Number 5." A Roomba circled the heart-shaped rug that said "Will you marry me too?" where she stood. We alternated between kissing and shrieking for the rest of the evening.

I'm thankful every day to live in a time and place where I don't have to hide in a special bar to dance with the woman I love, but I still wish I could go to the Double Header circa 1960, and there's nowhere I'd rather our romance have begun. When a place has enough stories associated with it, it becomes mythological. Each new story made in such a place inherits the power of the ones that preceded it. I think love is all about the creation of mythology: I had no doubt, kissing Mary Anne under that flailing tube man, that we are supposed to be in the same story. When I was panicking one night because even when you marry someone the story ends sometime, Mary Anne said, "This is forever. We're in forever right now," and it was the first time just existing had ever been enough for me. ■

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QUEER ISSUE

My First Time—A List

BY ILVS STRAUSS

MY FIRST TIME being told by an older woman that I reminded her of *that one Australian actress, Ruby was it?* from *Orange Is the New Black* while in a swimsuit, treading water in the deep end of the YMCA pool, post morning aqua-aerobics class: Won't lie, made my day. #celesbian

MY FIRST TIME not being able to figure out why I didn't want a cisgender dude friend to leave my house after we'd spent the afternoon sitting next to each other on my couch watching the movie *American Fabulous*: Oh, wait... I like him. #crushingonstraightdudes

MY FIRST TIME correcting my great-aunt that this person was not *mi amiga* but *mi novia* while she, my girlfriend, smiled uncomfortably and she, my great-aunt, waved her hand dismissively: I let it slide in a minor wash of defeat. #morethanlanguagebarrier

MY FIRST TIME listening to my butch nun of a middle-school PE teacher, Sister Christine, standing there in her tight Our Lady of the Lake T-shirt and knock-off Hammer pants, explain the rules of indoor flag football while the feeling of recognizing myself reflected back at me delicately twinged through my body: *I think, I remember thinking, I want to be a nun.* #blessedartthouamongstwomen

MY FIRST TIME staring at the carpet nap at my grandmother's house just after hearing my great-grandmother use a word that ended in an *o* instead of an *a*, albeit somewhat tongue in cheek, that passed as a term of endearment from her to me: Her laughter was flecked with kindness. #cabrito

MY FIRST TIME washing summer dirt off my naked body at the outdoor showers in the company of my mustachioed boss and half a dozen other women aged older to much older than I as they soaped and scrubbed and chatted and gossiped over the sound of Team Dresch playing in the rehearsal tent across the path: What alternate reality have I found myself in and could you please hand me the communal jug of lavender Dr. Bronner's? #michfest

MY FIRST TIME getting my fancy gold-handled, black-bristled toothbrush returned to me, upon my request, via snail mail after she broke up with me the first time: I had nothing of hers to return. #leavenotrace

MY FIRST TIME turning to my coworker after we both watched you disappear down the long hallway by the greenroom after you had surprise visited me and saying, "I'm gonna marry that lady." I almost bought you and your husband matching butt plugs as your wedding gift last summer, but my friend talked me out of it. #maybeforyouranniversary

MY FIRST TIME being late to a yoga class because I was busy replying to my friend's text asking if I would be in a threesome with her and her lady friend later that evening: I replied, much to her surprise, with "What time do you want me there?" #followyourbliss ■



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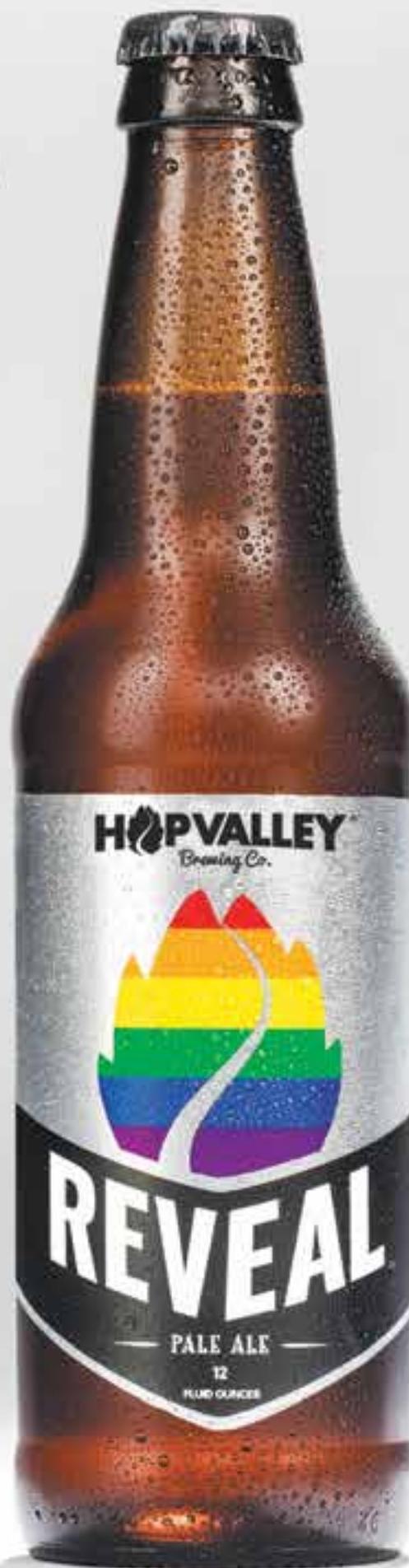
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QUEER ISSUE

My First Time Breastfeeding My Daughter

BY DANA FRIED

Breastfeeding is freaky. Not the sucking bit. You're reading *The Stranger*, so odds are you've had a titty sucked at some point in your life. No, it's because when my baby attached to my breast, there was an incredible chemical cascade that ran through my entire body like lightning. Imagine the most electric thing a partner has ever done to you, then multiply it by 10. I could feel my brain rewiring, creating pathways that would permanently connect me to my child. (And yeah, I kind of got off on it. Don't judge.)

I want to tell you the story of the first time I breastfed my daughter. But in order to tell you that story, I'll have to step back a bit...

I met my wife two and a half years and 2,700 miles ago in Virginia. We raced from "let's keep this casual" to "let's get married, have kids, and move to Seattle" in about 10 months. At almost 40, we knew we couldn't wait too long (also, clearly, waiting wasn't our strong suit), so within a year of landing in Seattle, my wife was pregnant with our first child.

Once you're pregnant (or, in our case, well before), you start obsessing over all of the ways you can fail at being a parent. Take breastfeeding—everyone says "breast is best." Figuring four boobs were better than two, and with me being unable to contribute to the physical burden of having our child by carrying her, I started looking for ways I could more actively help with breastfeeding. We eventually discovered the Newman-Goldfarb

Protocol, which allowed non-gestational parents to produce milk. One obstacle down!

Oh, also: I'm transgender.

There's a weird but surprisingly common notion that trans women's breasts aren't "real." When I told people about my plan to breastfeed, the most common reaction from both laypeople and medical professionals was "Wait, you can do that?" But had I not mammary glands? If you filled me with prolactin, would I not leak? We started the protocol in earnest (under the guidance of a queer lactation consultant, because Seattle), and a week before my partner was due, I was happily pumping more than an ounce at a time.

I used to joke that my transition was a success when my dysphoria was replaced with the standard-issue body hate that comes with being a woman. We're constantly told that our primary value as women is decorative, that failing to be attractive is the worst crime we can commit. But bodies aren't just decorative—they're functional, and we can seek validation in that function, too.

Lactating changed how I saw my body. Having breasts was great, but using them to feed another human being? That was magic. Specifically, it was *mom* magic. I might have been my daughter's sperm donor, but breastfeeding was how I knew I was going to be a mom. It validated my womanhood as much as any surgery ever could.

So... cut to the happy ending. My wife gives birth, we come home from the hospital,



LOUISA BERTMAN

we trade off breastfeeding duties, everybody gets enough sleep, and the three of us live happily ever after. Ha.

Here's what *actually* happened. I got sick a week before the due date and had to discontinue the protocol. The baby didn't come on schedule, so we induced two days later, followed by a grueling three-day labor that ended in an emergency C-section. By that point, I'd gone from producing an ounce of

milk to only a cc or two, and my partner's milk was going to take days to come in. The lactation consultants in the hospital were uninformed and singularly uncooperative. We had to start supplementing with formula. A few weeks later, we both gave up on breastfeeding and switched to formula completely.

So if our plan was an abject failure, why am I gushing about breastfeeding? Because when they pulled my daughter free of my wife's body, I was the first one to hold her. I took her back to the hospital room and did what any mom would do—I put her on my bare chest and let her find my breast. And that tiny, perfect creature latched onto me, and got what sustenance my body could provide, and was content.

It was in that moment—sitting in the hospital room, nursing my newborn daughter for the first time—that I became a mom. That moment created an unbreakable bond that will last us the rest of our lives. And yeah, that it took so little to do that was, in retrospect, freaky as hell. The failure of the breastfeeding plan my wife and I had so carefully constructed was disappointing. But I'll never say for even a moment that I regret any of it. ■

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The image is a vertical advertisement for the "PROOF WASHINGTON DISTILLERS FESTIVAL". At the top left, the festival's name is displayed in a white, serif font inside a dark, ornate frame. The background features a warm-toned photograph of a glass filled with whisky and large ice cubes. Below the title, the event details are listed: "Saturday, July 8" and "Fremont Studios" followed by the time "5:30pm - 9pm". A horizontal line separates this from the next section. The text "Delicious Bites From Local Restaurants" is centered above the bold, red text "Sample Spirits From 40 Washington Distillers". Another horizontal line follows. Below that, the text "New Product Releases, Try And Buy On-Site" is centered. A call-to-action box in the lower right contains the text "Get Your Tickets Early!" in orange, "\$45 GA • \$70 VIP" in white, and "Prices increase June 27" in white. The bottom of the page includes the website "proofwashington.org" and a "SPONSORED BY" section with logos for various companies.

A photograph showing two women in profile, wearing black safety gear including headsets and glasses. They are both holding and aiming semi-automatic rifles. The woman on the left is looking through the scope of her rifle, while the woman on the right is also focused on her aim. The background is dark, suggesting an indoor shooting range environment.

The image is a full-page advertisement for Uncle Ike's. The top half features a vibrant rainbow gradient background with the text "Uncle Ike's" in white script, "LGBTHC" in large red letters with a purple-to-blue gradient, and "PRIDE" in large white letters. Below this, the text "23RD & UNION" and "WWW.IKES.COM" are in blue, along with the phone number "1.800.GET.DRUGS". The bottom left contains a large "A 5% DONATION" section for Entre Hermanos, followed by a detailed paragraph about the organization. The bottom right lists various vendor logos: Velvet Swoon, Big Sur Extracts, Hot Sugar, OG, Phish, Leaf Werx, Sticky Frog, Solstice, and Artizen. The top right features a large "SALE!" in yellow, with sections for Flower, Vape, Edible, and Wax specials, all valid from 6/23 to 6/26.

QUEER ISSUE

My First Time Flying Across the Country to Date a Stranger

BY CHASE BURNS

Day 1: I have no idea what I'm doing, but I've made it to New Orleans. It's 8:50 p.m., two hours ahead of my normal time in Seattle, and in 10 minutes I'm going to meet a stranger I met on Instagram. His name is Marc. He's 31, he has thick black hair, and I think I have a serious crush on him. So much so, I traveled across the country to stay with him for a week. I've never done something like this. I don't even like meeting guys off Grindr because it feels like too much work. Yet somehow here I am, waiting on Magazine Street in New Orleans. I've quit my awful tech job and cashed in a measly year's worth of retirement (enough for one month's rent back home), and would be certain I'm having a mental breakdown if this didn't feel so good.

I've been thinking about this moment for a month. Every night, Marc and I talk on the phone, remarking how we don't believe in romance and how we like loud female punk bands but also secretly cry to Radiohead (only sometimes). We tell each other how surprised we are at our feelings for each other; how we've never met someone from Instagram; how we never expected something so fake to yield something so serious. We're suspicious, and so the only way to resolve it is by meeting, which we do, right now.

"Hey punk," he says. Good news: He wasn't catfishing me. More good news: He's stupidly handsome, wearing a white tee and jeans, like a hustler in a Tennessee Williams play. (Later, a street singer also tells him he looks like a Tennessee Williams hustler. It turns out he gets this all the time.) I giggle and cover my face. He kisses me. "Fuck," I gush. The kissing is perfect, and then so is the touching, and then later the fucking, but the simple novelty of watching his face move makes the trip worth it.

Day 2: We have our first meal together at the Joint, a barbecue place in the Bywater neighborhood. It's surrounded by Easter-colored shotgun houses and street cats. Inside, gutter punks eat slow-cooked pork next to tourists from southern suburbs. Like many things in New Orleans, the food demands your attention. Our eating is only interrupted by us gawking at each other. "You're here," he says, astounded, again and again.

Day 3: Our first days are filled with dates, but our "first date" is an accident. This time, our meat eating feels romantic under dim lighting, next to art made from beer caps. He tells me about missing his family in Portland. He's crusty Pacific Northwest scum at heart, but the crawfish and humidity and tinsel-wrapped porches of New Orleans turned a weeklong trip into three years. "This place does that to people," he says, as a tattooed server with severe bangs delivers macaroni and cheese, oysters, and foie gras, which feels hedonistic, like everything else here. He tells me he's known ASL forever since his sister has hearing loss. Spanish, too, because he's Mexican and Spanish. "How many languages do you have to speak to



FRANCKREPORTER/GETTY IMAGES

be a polyglot?" I ask, but he starts to cry, which makes me start to cry. "I'm sorry," he says. "You're making me think a lot about home." We smile and then blame our tears on the whiskey.

After dinner, we sit on rope swings attached to the branches of a live oak tree. These are trees that have lived through hundreds of years of hurricanes and heat, but here we are, two bloated queers full of booze and duck liver, worried the branches will snap under our weight. "I don't wanna leave," I say. "Then don't," he says. We laugh. Ships pushing up the Mississippi blow their horns.

Day 5: Marc is working. I walk from his house to his store in Uptown. It's a five-mile stretch that curves with the Mississippi, passing over the crumbling sidewalks of the Bywater and through the French Quarter, where clumps of tourists appear and vanish like cattle. The noise of New Orleans is as dense as its humidity, and it's on this walk that I realize a week will never be enough. Two weeks, maybe. But a week? No.

At night, I make him a proposition on the streetcar home. "It's silly for me to leave

now," I say, "because all my work is remote, and my friends say I should stay, and I don't wanna go." I expect a pause, but he hugs me and says, "Stay as long as you want. Please. Really." I take him up on the offer and decide to stay a month.

New Orleans is as nourishing to extroverts as Seattle is to introverts. In New Orleans, celebrations happen on their own time, and they require everyone's participation. **Day 8:** I'm stopped by a bike parade. **Day 9:** A real parade, but parades happen every day in New Orleans, without warning. **Day 11:** I find the decapitated head of a stuffed Miss Piggy and bring it home to Marc. That same day, he brings me a sequined shirt from Spongebob. There are trinkets everywhere. On **Day 12**, after another night of risky daiquiris, Marc gets quiet then says, "I love you. I want to be your boyfriend." I respond, "Yes, please," then remember to say what I think is obvious: "I love you, too."

Day 14: I try not to think about Day 31. The days are passing more quickly.

17: Everyone in New Orleans says

alcoholism doesn't exist, but then how do I explain the carnie who is always outside that dive bar called Big Daddy's who keeps asking me to cuddle with him? **19:** As much as the city gives, it takes, and hangovers are its weapon of choice. **21:** We decide it will be romantic to have sex in a graveyard. I dress for the occasion by wearing all black. First, we get a drink at Big Daddy's. **22:** We are still at Big Daddy's and the sun is out. I'm not sure anymore that I like bars being open 24/7. **23:** I secretly vomit in the bathroom at Marc's work. For the first time in my life, I deeply respect and admire a 2 a.m. bar close.

25: One-tenth of his hair is gray. How gray will it be next time I see him? **27:** We start telling our friends and family that we're dating. We feel like an eHarmony ad, but for Instagram. **29:** I tell Marc, "A month isn't enough. I don't know if any amount of time will be enough." "Duh," he says. **30:** We prepare ourselves for months of FaceTime by squeezing and biting and poking each other, trying to leave bruises so we remember we're real.

Day 31: I get a text from him while the stewardess is giving her safety speech. "I'm still here," it says. "I know," I send back, tallying the ways that's true: a tiny bruise from the pinching, a hiccup from the good-bye. New Orleans left me with marks. "I'm here, too," I say, and then I fly out of the swamp. ■

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QUEER ISSUE

My First Time Living in a Gay Neighborhood

It Wasn't So Blissful

BY WANCY YOUNG CHO

Exotic. The handsome owner of a popular eatery in Boystown, where I'd been living for about six months, is telling me that back home in Greece, the men would just go wild for me because *You, Wancy, are very exotic*. And what he's talking about is my being Asian. I consider my chubbiness, or the lilt in my speech, but what I want to ask is this: Is there actually some place I might be wanted?

In 1997, Chicago's Boystown became the first officially recognized gay neighborhood in the country, and it coincided with the year I attended my first Pride parade. I was 18 years old, my hair was streaked blond, my ears were pierced, and the rainbow rings strung around my neck jangled loudly as I scurried out the door.

I went with a good friend's uncle and his roommate. As we walked the few blocks from their apartment, people began to pour out from side streets and the Addison L stop. Boystown was Elysium—all rainbows and laughter, glistening bodies, tremors of joy, and men kissing men. As Bruce and Todd locked lips, it became beautifully obvious they were much more than long-term roommates. It was exhilarating to be in on it. I wanted to find my place in this menagerie. The place seemed magical.

Naperville was, and still is, affluent white suburbia at its maximum. My high school was lifted from any TV show based around the setting. There were popular kids—mostly jocks and cheerleaders—and also druggies, nerds, foreigners, and the anonymous. From time to time, the fresh-off-the-boat Asian contingent, or "FOBs" as they were referred to, would call me a "Twinkie"—spongy yellow cake on the outside with a creamy white filling.

I had many firsts in Naperville. Though not all of them were wonderful. The first blowjob I gave was to a married white man

who had chicken legs, a hairy belly, and a balding head. He introduced me to the (mostly white and married) tearoom culture of our local train station. *It's the busiest from 3 to 5 p.m. You know, when all the guys are coming home from work*, he said after I'd jerked him off into the toilet.

Nearly a year after high school, I moved to the city. Tired of the stiflingly manicured lives, fighting with my parents, sleeping in my car, I jumped at the chance to pick up extra shifts at work, borrowing money to get myself out. In the middle of summer that year, I headed to my very first apartment, just a half block off Halsted in Boystown, with everything I owned—I dared not leave a single piece of myself when I left.

As I was just 19 years old and without a fake ID, a whole sphere of gay life was cordoned off from me. It would be another year before I had my first drink, and I had zero confidence in my ability to dance. Walking around Boystown those first few weeks, I was beaming with expectant cheeriness. In my teenage romantic naïveté, I thought there'd be candlelight, holding hands at the movies, and bashful kisses in the vestibule of my apartment building. But hardly anyone was down with my Pollyanna-ass smiles and hellos—which quickly unraveled a lot of the

fantasies I'd had for my new life. When I got a job as a barista, it gave me some hope.

I asked guys out from behind the counter at my new job, on the street, on the bus, on the train, at restaurants and cafes, anywhere and everywhere. I kept a tally. By year's end, I'd asked out almost 100 men, two of whom gave me their numbers. Most were friendly rejections. One stood me up, and the other was only visiting from New York.

One guy told me he just wasn't into Asians. I remembered the train station, faces of anticipatory delight fading away as stall doors opened and the other guys saw my face. Or, I began to wonder, was it just my eyes?

NO FATS, NO FEMMES, NO ASIANS. I WAS ALL OF THOSE THINGS. IN WHAT OTHER WAYS COULD I BE EXCLUDED FROM LOVE?



LOUISA BERTMAN

Perhaps in the same way folks believe they'll be discovered shortly after arriving in Hollywood, I believed I'd find myself among a gaggle of gay friends and score a boyfriend in a flash. But the lasting friendships I made from that time in my life are all women, and I wouldn't go on my first date for another two years, in a different city 2,000 miles away.

I tried to have other needs met via Craigslist, where I encountered ads that ended with a phrase now commonly seen on a myriad of dating apps: *No Fats, No Femmes, No Asians*. I was all of those things.

In what other ways could I be excluded from love?

A new fantasy emerged. I would lose

weight, build muscle, alter my speech and voice, and save enough money to have eyelid surgery, increase the size of my nose, adding depth to my brow—and then I'd be a viable candidate for love. Years later, I would live in West Hollywood, obsessed with my body and always wondering who was looking.

Did I feel betrayed by gay men? I did. But more than that, I felt I had double-crossed myself. Perhaps, in order to find what I was looking for, I had to lose myself, my sense of identity, to truly arrive.

Now, 19 years later, it matters so much less—who is looking or where I live. I've got my eyes on the real prize. And the prize is me. ■

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QUEER ISSUE

My First Time at the Wildrose

An Oral History of One of the Last Lesbian Bars on the West Coast

BY SYDNEY BROWNSTONE

The Wildrose got its start in the early 1980s, when a collective of five women began scouting locations for a new lesbian bar. They wanted to open a women's bar that was light, served good food, and was a place where women would feel comfortable bringing friends and family, straight and gay. They settled on the location of the Sundance Tavern, a sports bar frequented by Seattle University students on the corner of 11th Avenue and East Pike Street. 'Nothing much was happening in the Pike/Pine corridor at the time,' says Bryher Herak, one of the five women in the collective, 'but it felt right to be on Capitol Hill. That's where most of the men's bars were, and we all fell in love with the Sundance's location.' And at a time when most of the city's gay bars were unmarked and hidden away, the bar had big windows that looked out on a main street."

—Dani Cone, *The Stranger*, 2002

THE EARLY DAYS

BIANCA BROOKMAN, OWNER OF ARIA SALON:

I had a girlfriend at the time (in the '80s) with a mohawk. We were punk rock; we would come up to the Hill all the time. I think I wasn't 21 yet, but I did get a fake ID, and the first thing we did is hit as many of the lesbian bars as we could. It was exciting and scary all at the same time. Not scary in the sense of wanting to run away or anything, but new, and a little underground, and edgier back then. These were the days when mullets were really popular.

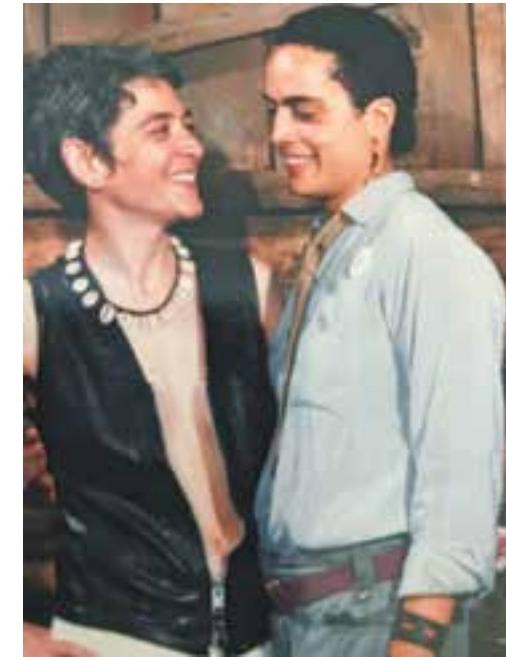
TARI MCKENZIE, 56, RETIRED: Back in the day, you could not bring a man in that bar. They were very rabid about it. And it did not matter if they were gay or not.

BIANCA BROOKMAN: It wasn't as accepting for men. And I hung out with quite a few gay men back then. And also, it was hard for me to fit in a little bit because I think women were really seriously political about not dressing for men, and I wore heels, kind of looked like a slut. Back in the day, there would be bull dykes, butch, or femme. And oftentimes femme women—apparently that's sort of what I fit into, even though that's not how I saw myself—would date butch women. But I've always been attracted to girls more like myself. It's definitely better now, and there's a bunch of different pronouns now, and a bunch of different ways to fit in.

JANUARY, 1996

MINTY LONGEARTH, 45, COMMUNITY OUTREACH SPECIALIST:

Everybody kept talking about, "Go to the Wildrose!" And I walked in, and it was super friendly but cool. I remember that it was the first time I saw white women in the same space with women of color just having a good time and hanging out. That wasn't familiar to me in Southern California, where I moved from. I loved every bit of it: every sip of water, every flirtation across the room, every time you would catch somebody's eye. Everything felt all new and like: "This is Seattle. I'm surprised this is Seattle."



WILDROSE The combination of alcohol and dehydration and exes and futures all in one location.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BRYHER HERAK

PRIDE, 1997

MONISHA HARRELL, 42, BOARD CHAIR OF EQUAL RIGHTS WASHINGTON:

The legend of the Wildrose was really huge, and the first time I walked in, I was surprised at the legend. They usher you from the interior room to the outside beer garden, and it's summertime in Seattle. And there's this huge ice sculpture that people are doing shots off of. I'm pretty sure it was something raunchy. I think it was breasts. The combination of alcohol and dehydration and exes and futures all in one location... It was fantastic and nobody was shy about taking shots. And wall-to-wall women. I have no idea where all of those people go when it's not Pride weekend.

THE CIRCLE OF LIFE IN THE LESBIAN WORLD

MONISHA HARRELL: It was like this miraculous game of dodgeball when you walked in, where it was like, oh, we can't go over there because so-and-so's ex is over there. And oh, I'm kind of interested in her over there. We should go over that way. But no, her ex is over there, we can't. It's like finding the right

spot to stand that somebody's ex isn't in. We started out there, a tight group, a crew that's hanging. And then all of a sudden, people get a couple drinks in them and they start to stray from the pack a bit.

There was so much interpersonal dynamic in there at one time: the history of past relationships, the potential of new relationships developing there. It's fascinating because you don't actually know who someone may go home with that day. At the start of the day, there might be exes who hate each other. But by the end of the day, they've gotten back together, and it's been 45 minutes, and you haven't seen them. And you just assume, *I think they left together*. But without cell phones at that period, you had to wait until the next morning to find out.

SHELLEY BROTHERS AND MARTHA MANNING TAKE OVER, 2000–2003

MARTHA MANNING: The first day, we took out the jukebox. I know there's a place for lesbian music, like Indigo Girls and Melissa Etheridge and all that stuff. But working here for years already, we were so over it. You're

working the whole shift, somebody comes in and plays these songs, and you're like okay, great. Then they walk out, and someone else comes in. You know who had to listen to that stuff 17 times a night? We did.

SHELLEY BROTHERS: "Come to My Window" was like... [groans]

MARTHA MANNING: And ABBA. Every time "Dancing Queen" would come on, she'd shut it off. Like, "Here's your dollar, I can't..."

SHELLEY BROTHERS: I can't do it.

THE WILDROSE GAME

TARI MCKENZIE: If you want to get attention at the Rose, all you have to do is grab a woman and try to go into that single-stall bathroom. And every single time, you will get attention from the bartenders. They will yell and scream at you. I don't know if they think you're gonna do drugs or finger-bang your girlfriend. It's quite a fun thing to do on the weekend when you're bored. It's like, "Don't worry about busing your tables, but GOD DON'T LET THEM GO TO THE BATHROOM TOGETHER." ▶



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ON "BEING MEAN" TO MEN

LON ZOOK, 26, WOODWORKING STUDENT

LON ZOOK: I was talking to my friend, a gay boy, and he was like, "Do all lesbians hate men?" At that point in time, I was like, *Sure, lesbians can be mean. Why are lesbians so mean? Especially to gay boys?* I totally understand why a gay boy would walk in there and not be treated super well, because there are tons of bars that cater to gay men. I've totally encountered that [at gay bars for men.] I'm five-foot-three on a good day, and being at the bar and trying to order drinks, I've had male bartenders look past me and help the guy behind me. Though we're supposed to be included, LGBT siblings, you're not and it's obvious.

ON BEING TRANS OR NONBINARY IN THE LEZZIE BAR

NAT, 28: Seattle talks a good game about being an open, progressive, inclusive of all city. But ask any QTPOC if that's been their experience, and I'd bet that's an unlikely universal truth. If my choices to fully express myself without judgment, without fear of threatening someone's hetero/cis-normative mind-set are at a once-a-month dance party at a venue that's kind enough to let us use it for three hours one night OR the oldest lesbian bar where I'm constantly misgendered, where I may or may not get hit on by a drunk frat guy looking to see if his Axe body spray can turn me on, I'm going to naturally and understandably feel out of place/burdensome/unwelcome.

DANNI ASKINI, 34, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF GENDER JUSTICE LEAGUE

The first time I went to the Rose, it was Pride 2007, which was right after I moved to the city. I'd never been to a dyke bar, and I was super excited to go. I was working at Verbenna, the queer women's health organization on the Hill, and my colleagues wanted to grab a drink. And I remember the bartender looked at me, thought I was underage, and said, "Let me see your ID." And then she said, "Honey, who you gay with? Which one of them?" And I said, "I don't know, I'm bi, I don't know what to say." It was really funny and awkward... I think she pegged me as a straight girl and was like: "What are you doing in our space? You look underage and you look straight. Why are you here?" I've only ever had positive experiences, and Shelley and Martha have been really great to us and really supportive of Gender Justice League. I've never felt unwelcome as a trans woman. The Rose is definitely the place I go.

LON ZOOK: It's kind of difficult sometimes to be nonbinary in a lesbian space. I'm not on hormones or anything like that, and oftentimes people assume my gender is female. It's really difficult being seen. Being in lesbian crowds, sometimes when you come out as nonbinary, you get a bit of pushback, because it's like you leave your band of sisters behind. People still think I'm female most of the time. I feel oftentimes within our own community there's this "us versus them" mentality, the masculine folks and the femme folks.

DANNI ASKINI: For trans women, it feels like a super important space to hang out with friends and not worry about being harassed by people.

MARTHA'S ACCIDENT, 2008

On September 3, 2008, a runaway car came crashing into a pump at a gas station on Broadway. Martha Manning was caught in the resultant explosion and badly injured. She spent three agonizing weeks in Harborview's burn unit and received painful skin grafts. "The way the people from the bar rallied around me..." Manning says, her voice trailing off. "This accident and the resulting response from the community has made me realize how lucky I am to have even a small role in the history of the Wildrose. It has given me a family and a community that I love." —Adrian Ryan, *The Stranger*, 2009

2009

TARI MCKENZIE: I have a daughter who I conceived through donor insemination with a partner. And she was always very interested in going to the places we went. So when she became old enough, I was able to take her to the Rose for a late-afternoon lunch, because they served food. And that was something that she absolutely loved. It made her feel so grown-up to come with me to the Rose, sit in the window, watch people, and be part of that experience. That was something that was a joy to do with her.

EXCERPT FROM A ONE STAR YELP REVIEW, JULY 17, 2010

STEPHEN L., LOS ANGELES: I would love to give this place a higher [sic] rating, but there is a lot of customer service work that needs to be done first.

THE GENTRIFICATION PUSH

MINTY LONGEARTH: I haven't been back since 2008, and that was more because I was further out, and, you know, [the city gentrified and] pushed brown people out. And ►

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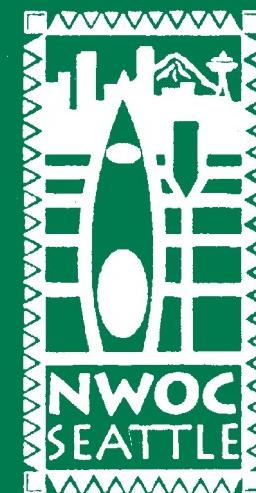
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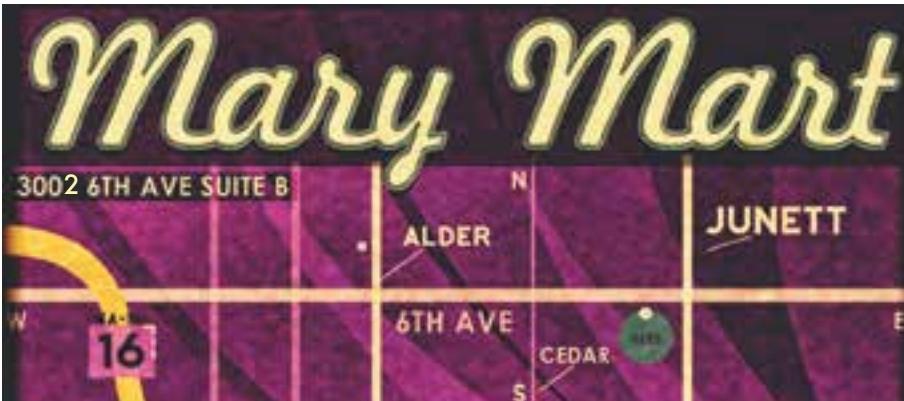
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there isn't anything like that down in the South End. There was nothing like Wildrose. And even now, after all these years, I feel this huge affinity for Wildrose. And I'm always surprised when women move into town and don't immediately go there. The feeling has changed. You've got a lot more straight people trying to see the queer thing, and that's some bullshit. Dear straight people, queer people don't go: "Let's go see straight people. Let's go to that bar; I hear it's totally straight."

DEAR STRAIGHT PEOPLE

MARTHA MANNING: If there's anybody being inappropriate to anyone else, we try to nip it in the bud. We're careful, but we address it.

SHELLEY BROTHERS: It's a challenge because we've never wanted to discriminate against anyone. Everyone has always been welcome in here. But you also don't want to see the character of the bar changing. So we have to be very on top of that.

MARTHA MANNING: We've kicked out lesbians who have complained about the straight people. If they step over a line, we kick them out.

EXCERPT FROM A TWO-STAR YELP REVIEW, MAY 22, 2013

ALLISON T., SEATTLE: What pact with the devil did the Wildrose make to allow them to be the only lesbian bar in Seattle?

How is this possible? There is no well-to-do lesbian out there ready to dump some money into some crunchy Tegan & Sarah [sic] remix spinning overpriced craft cocktail clusterfuck of women's studies degrees? If only we could scare all the bros out of Montana...

NEW YEAR'S EVE, 2014

MADELINE HANHARDT, 24, ORGANIZER OF THE "GAY GIRL GANG"

MEET-UPS: Right after I moved to Seattle, I had been 21 for only a few months and I was really excited to go the Wildrose's big New Year's Eve block party. It was the same year that they turned 30 years old and celebrated the anniversary of the bar. Someone pickpocketed me on the way to the bar, so I couldn't get in. But of course, this little band

of queer women came to my rescue and snuck me a flute of champagne and gave me a New Year's kiss. It was hilarious and so representative of how magical our community can be and how we can really take care of one another. As a young, drunk, queer girl in the city, not knowing where I fit in, it really went a long way to have been extended an invitation into a community like that.

HALLOWEEN, 2015

NAT: We ended up at the Rose on Halloween, and after some time there, "Ruth Bader Ginsburg" walks up to me and says she loves my costume. We talked, we danced, we established we were single. But after coming back from the bathroom, she was gone! I'm not going to play this out like a problematic episode of *How I Met Your Mother*, but I was like, if there's ever been a missed connection ad worth posting, this would be it. So that's one of my favorite memories—the day I missed out on the chance to ask out RBG.



FLYING THE FLAG

MADELINE HANHARDT: I think of the Wildrose a lot. I compare it to family, because it's kind of like going to a family reunion.

DANNI ASKINI: It's really the center of my social nightlife. I just think about dancing with friends and doing karaoke and feeling safe. In an ever-changing Capitol Hill, it seems like a hallmark that remains in the center of my life.

MONISHA HARRELL: I talk about my first time there being two decades ago, and I think about all of the baby gays who have come after me, and the legions who came before me. I think if you are a queer in the Seattle area, the Wildrose is part of your history. ■

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QUEER ISSUE

My First Time Being Sober in a Gay Bar

"It's a Little Like Coming Out," a Lesbian Friend Said

BY DAVE WHEELER

I'm painfully early and alone. Cucci's Critter Barn at Kremwerk, 7 p.m., the invite said. I should have known drag queens wouldn't start until at least 8:30. The room is empty, but sultry crimson and lavender LEDs keep me company. The music is a presence, but I don't have to shout when ordering a tonic and lime at the bar. As if not to offend, I add "for now," and the bartender laughs. "I like that. You'll get to the liquor eventually," she says, and tells me no charge. For a moment I'm flustered and feel conspicuous. I find a seat in a corner and wait.

Sobriety came to me first as an exercise in financial restraint. I had been spending roughly \$200 a month on alcohol—not an outlandish amount, but it adds up. There were other reasons to experiment with being dry, too, like physical and mental health, but when it came to telling friends, frugality seemed like the simplest rationale.

"It's a little like coming out," Fried, a lesbian friend, told me during my first week. Fried's been sober for a year now. "There can be a social stigma to it. People think that sober people are uptight, or broken in some way, or sick. And that's really unfortunate, because it's the healthy choice."

Although it's not unique to queer culture, the dominant role booze plays in our social networks has been making me wary. Nearly every night of the week, gay bars host dance parties, drag shows, fetish nights, TV/movie viewings, trivia, and karaoke. And even if the event isn't officially sponsored by a beer or vodka brand, you can be sure that plenty will be flowing. Even when connecting on your social app of choice, the natural next move—besides sex—is to grab a drink together.

Chris Stedman, author of *Faitheist*, quit drinking six years ago, when he realized he was unhappy with the decisions he had been making under the influence. "A lot of us struggle to really embrace our desires. We have a fraught relationship with them, and alcohol can be a disinhibitor." I called him because he's mentioned his sobriety on social media, and I've long admired the interfaith work he does as a queer atheist. "But if the only way to move past some of my shame and pursue my desires is by using alcohol, then I think that's a problem."

It can be a tricky call to make. While booze has spawned plenty of guilt and regret in my life, I can honestly say that it's also helped me access parts of myself that I might not have otherwise. Liquor played a key role in my ability to come out; two or three drinks in, I could let slip how hot I thought a male friend was, or I might try striking an unfamiliar femme pose.

Seth, trans masculine and sober for 18 years, remembers me in those days. Even at work, he saw right through my straight act, and so when we met up again years later to discuss my sobriety and his, I couldn't help



Kremwerk

KINGMON CREATIVE

but remember how much I relied on his encouragement back then just to come out.

"The hardest thing for sober people to do," he said, "is to reach out to someone." That was exactly why I wanted to get together, to use the lack of alcohol as an excuse to connect. I'd relied on alcohol as a social catalyst for years; it's nice not to need it.

Loneliness is a common denominator among the sober queers I've talked with. Chris described it as "standing on the edge of the experience" and feeling like "everyone else is participating in this thing that I'm not."

The easy solution might be to associate only with sober people, but that's not an especially appealing prospect. "That would just limit my life in a way that I don't want," Fried explained.

Over time, I learned it took less and less alcohol for me to sing karaoke or dance or strike up a conversation. I started to realize that without booze I could be more present, that I could face desire nakedly. Full sobriety, it struck me, could be an opportunity to engage socially without a chemical veil—something that seems anathema, if not downright subversive, during Pride.

And Kremwerk turns out to be a perfect place for a test run. My friend Eamon, who is sober, has sent me dozens of invites to see him perform, and now I'm finally here—early enough to have any seat in the house. The social insecurities prompted at the bar fade into the night. The show is impressive,



Dave Wheeler

hilarious—I can't tell if Eamon is more gorgeous in or out of drag. Conversation comes more easily than I'd expected, but it's still nice to have that glass of tonic in my hand, even if it's not actually rearranging my brain chemistry. It's only the next morning that I realize I forgot to tip all evening. The guilt tickles my conscience, but it's not nearly as vicious as on mornings after drinking, when my mind raced through blurred memories, praying desperately I didn't make an utter fool out of myself.

"Is it weird to do drag sober?" I asked Eamon later, over coffee. "I mean, you're always performing in bars, right?" We first met in a bar; Pony, on karaoke night.

"I'm finding ways to keep myself busy in

party situations," he said. "So I can still be out and with people, and not a total recluse. And I got to a point, especially in drag, where it would be so hard to move around a busy bar, I got used to not drinking much."

"But I'm sure plenty of people want to buy you drinks."

"I'll tell them, 'Oh, I don't drink.' A lot of times I feel like I need to say something so they don't think I'm judging them. But I really like soda water and bitters. I'll have a Red Bull if I'm feeling crazy—or needing to feel crazy, I guess!"

The people I've reached out to agree it feels great not to need alcohol for a good time. Chris also mentioned how sobriety has made consent a much clearer factor in his sex life. We're all looking to connect better—with ourselves and the people around us—and alcohol, for me, can so easily impede connection: friends who don't remember your conversation later, lovers too wasted for sex, whole mornings squandered on recovery. I've been on all sides.

That said, I'm not holding myself to a time frame. "People will say, 'Oh, I'm gonna do it for a month,' and it's like the whole time they're thinking about the end of that month," Eamon pointed out. I've always considered sobriety an absence, or a penance, but I'm not thinking of it that way now. I'm thinking of it as a way to have a clearer head and more energy to fill longer days with more ambitious endeavors.

Queerness has a decorated history of fashioning alternatives to routine, breaking norms. I'm not saying sobriety is for everyone, but trying it out for myself has given me confidence, happiness, and much-needed perspective. ■

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QUEER ISSUE

My First Time Masturbating in My Male Body

BY BUCK ANGEL

I remember the first time that I connected to my body. The body I was not supposed to have. The body that I felt betrayed me for so many years. This body that I was told was female and that I would just have to live with for the rest of my life. I remember feeling so depressed in that body. I remember wishing every day that somehow, some way I would magically become G.I. Joe and have this supermasculine man body, one with muscles and abs, one in which I could feel comfortable taking my shirt off at the beach, having people run their hands across it and say, "Wow, you have a nice chest." A body that had hair all over it like Burt Reynolds in *Smokey and the Bandit*—you know, that kind of man chest.

I have always been a very sexual person; even when I hated my body, there was always this desire to be sexual. Can you imagine how difficult that was? Looking back, it's fucking amazing I even had sex—sexual desire is that powerful. Even through the hate and disgust of my body, I figured out, with the usage of drugs and alcohol, how to have sex. But then at one point I realized I was really not feeling anything or remembering anything, and when I finally stopped drinking and using

drugs, I was faced with this newfound awareness of how much I really wasn't connected to my body. It's funny how, when you are not wasted, you have to face life, and you either deal with it and try to learn from that or just stay in denial even while sober.

I decided to deal with it.

While sober, I realized my body was not lining up with my identity. My identity was male. My body was female. This was, in a sense, killing me. It's a very hard thing to get across to someone who doesn't have this problem, but just imagine for a minute that your body isn't yours. That your genitals are those of the other gender. That you hate getting naked, that you hate touching yourself and, even worse, having someone touch you. The fear of

someone saying something. The fear of being. All of these things I lived with most of my life. The hate and disgust of my body.

Then one day I woke up in a new body. One that resembled G.I. Joe. The one I always dreamed of. It was a fucking miracle. I am not kidding—it was a miracle that I will never forget. I remember this day so vividly because it's the day that forever changed the way I felt and connected to my body. And that was because I woke up horny and wanted to

THEN, ONE DAY
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the opening of my vagina, my hole. I had never been comfortable touching that area of my vagina before. But this morning for some reason I was drawn to that part of my genitalia. It kind of felt like it was sucking me in without warning. It just all happened so naturally and without any hesitation. Next thing I knew, my hand was penetrating my vagina and I was having the most intense and insane feeling I had ever felt in my body. I realized that I was having an orgasm from penetration. It was like nothing I had ever experienced sexually in my life. The clouds parted!

In that moment, I knew that I had finally connected with my body. It was like my body was telling me that I was okay. That I could have this vagina and still be a man. That enjoying my

vagina sexually was up to me and no one else. That I didn't have to be ashamed of myself anymore. Those feelings came to me the first time I penetrated myself, the first time I was honest with myself. The first time I really learned to love myself. ■

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In order to better understand and identify solutions, we need to question these structural barriers. And to end hunger, we must help end practices that widen opportunity gaps, as well as instill the practices that help create opportunities and lead to a more equitable society.

Advocacy on behalf of marginalized people is nothing new to Northwest Harvest. For 50 years, we've been building coalitions and partnerships to help those in need. During this time, we've grown from a project of local social activists to our position today as the foremost leader in fighting hunger in the state of Washington.

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We ask you to join us. Make yourself heard. Donate. Volunteer. Be a voice. Together, we can end hunger in our state.



QUEER ISSUE

My First Time with a Dominatrix

It Didn't Go Exactly as I Expected

BY MARGA GOMEZ

My mom would spank me when I was a kid. She said it was for my own good. And she was right, because I really get off on it now.

I'm grateful to my dysfunctional strict parents and years of Catholic school repression for leading me to the rough stuff in adulthood, though bondage is getting problematic these days because I have to pee frequently and I'm prone to charley horses.

When *Basic Instinct* premiered in 1992, I fantasized about Sharon Stone tying me to the bed like she did to Michael Douglas. The gay community was outraged and called for a movie boycott because Ms. Stone played a bisexual novelist who might also have been an ice-pick murderer; a plot point GLAAD declared was the wrong message to send America about queer women. I believe it was the right message. Nobody fucked with us in 1992.

A few years later, I moved to Hollywood to make it in the movies and sleep with actresses. My first break was a small part in *Batman Forever*, the one where Batman and Robin have pronounced nipples, making it the best *Batman* in the franchise. I still get money. My role was "Second Journalist." You can see me in the Gotham gala scene. I'm the only woman wearing a black turtleneck dress in a room full of bodice-busting bit players. The character of "First Journalist" was played by a nice lady, but she was pushy between takes.

She said, "You have to meet my lesbian friend. You two would hit it off." She was one of those straight people who always try to mate their lesbian friends like we're pedigree dogs.

I met her lesbian friend for lunch in WeHo. Lesbian friend looked achingly stylish as she handed her keys to the valet. Her smoking good looks were offset by a stale cloud of whiskey fumes. At lunch, she went on about her two-month cleanse, which was not in itself a deal breaker. She was just too drunk to date. Then she said, "Television destroys the soul. So I quit acting. I'm just a dominatrix now. I beat the shit out of the same studio heads who used to reject me. Hope that doesn't freak you out."

Trying to contain myself, I said, "That's cool."

On our second date, she was drunk again. Dinner was unbearable. She was trite and talked over me constantly. But we ended up having sex in my motel room, because how often would I get to fuck someone who had guest-starred on ABC and NBC? She seemed really into the sex at first, but when it was my turn, she got skittish and said, "I'm late for a client in the Valley. I could come by tomorrow and show you what I do. Want to try a little?"

I asked: "Will you be tying me up?" ("Like in *Basic Instinct*?" I wanted to say, but played it cool.)

She said she'd "bring the bag." I acted like I knew what was in the bag.

Up to this point, my only BDSM experience was in the AOL chat rooms. Not satisfying. Dial-up killed any vibe, and nobody had webcams, so you could lie about whatever you were or were not putting up your butt.

The next night, the lesbian friend was three hours late and drunker than ever, but she had brought "the bag" and a bottle of Jack to level off. She used my bathroom to change into her standard-issue black PVC Mistress wear. She was moving slow. I was relieved when she blindfolded me so I could imagine a better presentation. She struggled to tie my hands to the motel bed frame. "You could tie my wrists tighter," I told her many times.

Finally, I just accepted that this dominatrix could not tie a knot. To make the best of it, I moaned and squirmed as if I was trying to get free, but really I was holding on to the loose knots, from which I could escape like Houdini at any moment.

"You tied up good? Can you see anything?" she asked too nicely for a dominatrix. I heard her take another swig from her bottle. Then she commenced rummaging in the bag. I had a feeling she was looking for a candle to drip hot wax on me—which I'm not really into (also not into anal or nipple clamps that are too tight). Ideally, I'd like to be tied up and forced to have vanilla sex.



LOUISA BERTMAN

"Are you ready?" I heard her put the bag down.

Silence followed and then the *snip, snip, snip* of sharp little scissors waving over my body. Was she going to cut me? I wasn't into that, either. She yanked my pubic hair with one hand, trimmed with the other, and asked, "Do you have a safe word?"

I told her it was "Batman."

She passed out halfway into the renovation, leaving me with random topiary shapes between my legs. I finally understood why she offered me the freebie. ■

Marga Gomez is a nationally touring stand-up comedian and writer-performer of 12 solo plays. Her website is margagomez.com.

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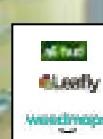
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QUEER ISSUE

My First Time Realizing I Wasn't Queer

I'm Just a Boring Lesbian Who Dreams of Owning Mini Cows

BY KATIE HERZOG

I'm not much of a partyer these days. On most nights, I listen to public radio and yell at my upstairs neighbor to turn down her goddamn music and stop talking to her goddamn friends so loud. (As you can imagine, I'm very popular.) I occasionally eat meals outside of my house and go to book readings and talks where I'm the youngest person in the audience by about 70 years, but I rarely go *out* anymore. It's just not my thing; my thing is staying home with my girlfriend and my soft pants. But one night last winter, an old friend was in town, and so I decided to leave my girlfriend and my soft pants and meet my old pal at Pony, a gay bar on Capitol Hill. Maybe I would even get a drink. *Wild.*

Now, my old friend—let's call her "Rya"—actually *is* wild. And when we met, I was wild, too: I drank, I smoked, I broke local, state, and federal laws on a regular basis, and I got in so many boozy accidents that I have two fake teeth and a scar that looks like Adolf Hitler on my shoulder. I also burned down a porch. That's just how life was in my 20s: unpredictable, well-lubricated, and, from the glimpses of memory I still possess, pretty fucking fun. A special highlight of this time was when I was a go-go dancer in a rock 'n' roll band. I have about as much natural rhythm as Ted Cruz, but at the time I was in possession of the one quality required to go-go dance in a band called Shit Horse: no shame. For three—or was it four?—years, I jumped around on many a stage wearing tighty-whities, a horse-head mask, and flesh-toned pasties so it looked like I'd had my nipples surgically removed. These days, the only shows I go to are seated.

Rya still had one foot in that life, and if I was honest, I was a little jealous. I missed drinking and smoking and peeing in alleyways. It was a great way to make friends. But at this point in my life, the only thing I overdo is Sleepytime tea and *Law & Order: SVU*. I couldn't remember the last time shit got weird. I wanted to revisit my old life for just a night, and Pony, with dicks plastered on the walls and hanging from the ceiling, was the perfect place to pretend that I was still fun.

Over drinks, my friend filled me in. She and her wife had opened up their relationship the year before and—surprise, surprise—they were now divorced. After the breakup, Rya started seeing someone genderqueer who lived in a big house with their lovers and their lover's lovers. She showed me pictures from a recent sex party, where they pierced each other with long needles and drank each other's

blood. She assured me that everyone got tested first and it was perfectly safe, but still, the look on my face must have said, *ew, sick, gross.*

Rya laughed and called me a prude.

"Well, I don't want to drink blood," I said. "So I guess you're right."

When I filled her in on my life, the stories were just as exciting. "We took the ferry up to Whidbey Island and got a new rug last week," I said. "It's from Iran. Plus we're thinking about moving up north and starting a hobby farm. We might get a mini cow! Have you seen them? So cute."

"Wow," Rya said. "You really are a lesbian."

How rude.

At that point, I'd dated women for nearly half my life. I was about as likely to fall in love with a man as I was a cat. Less, really, because a cat would never press its boner into my back while I was trying to sleep. Still, I hadn't thought of myself as a *lesbian* since sophomore year in college, when coworkers at the lesbian-owned cafe where I worked introduced me to the term "queer." Initially, I was shocked to hear these shaved-head baristas casually throwing around a slur. "Queer" had been hurled at me in high school, usually by rednecks in Big Johnson T-shirts. "Hey," they'd yell at me and the other short-hairs. "You queer?"

I didn't know it in high school, but my Mountain Dew-drinking classmates were right: Within a year of leaving home, I would have my first girlfriend. Soon after, I'd start

working at the cafe, where my new coworkers patiently explained that "queer" was okay now. We were reclaiming it.

Immediately I was all about this new word. "Paper or plastic?" the cashier would ask me at the grocery store. "Queer," I'd say, "I'm queer." The term "lesbian" quickly came to seem old-school and antiquated, something that signified you just didn't get it. Lesbians drove Subarus and wore cargo shorts; queers rode fixies and didn't need 16 pockets in their khakis. The

distinction was political, as well. Lesbians were normies; queers were anti-capitalist, anti-racist, anti-marriage, anti-monogamy, anti-gender, and—for me at least—anti having a full-time job. Instead, I worked 20 hours a week at wherever would have me and spent the rest of my time getting in trouble and hanging out with my friends—all of whom, of course, were queer too.



LOUISA BERTMAN

But, gradually, things began to change. LGBTQ grew so many letters, it started to look Gaelic. Miley Cyrus got an undercut and came out as pansexual. Same-sex marriage, once as binding as two 5-year-olds exchanging ring pops, became the law of the land. Naturally, corporations jumped on the bandwagon. American Airlines, Jell-O, AT&T, Dove, Uggs, Miller, Maytag, IHOP, and Smirnoff all launched ad campaigns celebrating queerness, showing us how willing they were to take queer dollars, too. Chipotle started selling T-shirts that read "¿Homo estas?" with a burrito wrapped in rainbow tinfoil on the front. Queer became normal, widespread, mainstream. And one day, I saw the very same rednecks in Big Johnson T-shirts—or at least their high-school girlfriends—casually referring to themselves as queer on Facebook. It didn't matter if you were a married mother of two whose closest same-sex experience was watching *Ellen*; you, too, could be queer.

Cognitively, objectively, I knew this was a good thing. There is power in numbers, and anything that makes life easier for baby gays in Alabama and Alaska is good, right? But it felt like queer had become a sort of accessory. And while everyone's teen cousin was coming out and Gatorade was tweeting pictures of rainbow-colored sports drinks, actual queer people were still suffering. LGBTQ teens were still four times more likely to commit suicide than their straight peers. Trans folks were still being murdered. My friends were still estranged from their families because of who they loved. What kind of victory was this?

At the same time, almost so slowly that I didn't even notice it, I began to change as well. My politics remained the same, but I started to think that maybe having a career would be a nice change of pace. Since that

was hard to do from a barstool, I closed my tab and got a full-time job. Then I began to think that owning a home someday wouldn't really make me a sellout after all. I started paying taxes and saving for retirement. I was still mostly friends with queer people, but I met a few straight folks and was surprised to find out they were just as good as my queer friends. Sometimes they were better—even ones with kids! Who knew breeders could be cool? Clearly, I was getting old.

What I looked for in a partner changed as well: A 401(k) became a much bigger turn-on than a large Instagram following, and the idea of a *single* partner—of not constantly processing my feelings and checking in with dates—started to sound kind of nice, too. Soon, I met a woman who owned her car outright and whose internet wasn't stolen from the day care across the street. On our first date, I asked if she called herself queer. "If I'm being completely honest," she said, "that word kind of annoys me." We moved in together within the year.

"Yup," Rya said at Pony, "total lez."

Right then, I saw it for the first time: My old friend was right, I had grown up to be a lez. I wanted 16 pockets in my cargo shorts and a long-sleeved T-shirt that said "Life Is Good" on the front. I wanted a dog and a Subaru and a girlfriend who slept with me and no one else. I wanted low-key, no-drama, middle-aged, normie romance. And I had that—she was back at home, watching *SVU* on our couch.

I finished my drink and hugged Rya goodbye. There was a DJ setting up, and I wanted to get out before the crowd arrived. I wasn't queer; I was a boring old lesbian. And for the first time in years, that felt perfectly, wonderfully right. ■

AT THIS POINT IN MY LIFE, THE ONLY THING I OVERDO IS SLEEPYTIME TEA AND LAW & ORDER: SVU. I COULDN'T REMEMBER THE LAST TIME SHIT GOT WEIRD.

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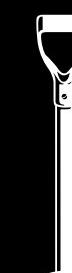
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QUEER ISSUE

My First Time Singing Karaoke Post-Transition

Whatever My Voice Betrayed, There Were Only Compliments and Applause

BY KATHERINE CROSS

can't sing.

My out-of-tune bleating, likely considered a form of cruel and unusual punishment under the Geneva convention, is nevertheless something I have quite a bit of fun with. Singing and dancing when we think no one's around is, surely, one of those simple experiences that unites us all. Music catches; it was viral before we had a word for such things, in part because it so often gives lyrical form and melodious content to our emotions. Hearing what your emotions sound like can be cathartic.

I sing sad songs when I'm depressed, with much the same feeling as I might brood before the climax of a Wagnerian opera; you're there, deep in that moment, riding the music as you give voice to something stirring inside you.

Whether you suck at it is immaterial. Sucking at it *in public*, however, is another matter—especially when a singing voice is

It was, at the time, so small a sacrifice when set against the overwhelming need to transition that I barely thought about it. It didn't occur to me then, but finding my terrible singing voice again would be incredibly important to me.

TAROT'S FOOL

To even get to a point where you want to transition from one sex to another requires you to overcome a variety of psychic, as well as practical, obstacles.

One of the highest hurdles for me was fearing I would never be loved if I transitioned, for instance. Taking that step to transition is to be tarot's Fool, the brave naif leaping from on high, trusting in fate to catch her. You have to reach a point of peace with your fears, not defeating them so much as domesticating them. In my case, that meant knowing that any love I experienced while living a lie would always have a bitter taste to it, that whatever

HAVING THE "WRONG" VOICE FOR SOMEONE OF YOUR APPARENT GENDER GOES BEYOND SIMPLY SUCKING AT SINGING; IT OPENS THE DOOR TO ALL THE EXISTENTIAL CRISSES (AND EVEN VIOLENCE) THAT KARAOKE IS SUPPOSED TO KEEP AT BAY.

one of the most gendered things in our world of sound. The Italianate scales that define the music we hear are, with very limited exceptions that stand out precisely for their gender bending, sharply gendered. The last thing a newly out trans woman wants to do is invite cruel questions and mockery about her voice when she tries to sing. "Why do you sound like a dude?" is not a question one wants to deal with when you're just out trying to have a good time.

"Karaoke" literally means "empty orchestra" in Japanese, but the essence of karaoke lies in its full audience. The point is to share your lack of musical training and thoroughly unprofessional, off-key singing with others who will do the same with you. Though karaoke stars and singing competitions that reward expertise are commonplace, the workaday purpose of the exercise is to suck at singing in the cheerful company of others.

Yet having the "wrong" voice for someone of your apparent gender goes beyond simply sucking at singing; it opens the door to all the existential crises (and even violence) that karaoke is supposed to keep at bay. I was introduced to karaoke in high school and, living in New York City, had plenty of opportunities to hang out with my geeky friends to sing badly in English and Japanese. But after I transitioned at age 21, I abruptly stopped doing karaoke. I had enough on my plate without worrying about how it would look, singing in public with a deep voice.

social risks I took by transitioning were outweighed by a chance at healing the pain I'd lived with for so long. It's that last epiphany that enables trans people to make so many sacrifices to become who we are.

We give up stable jobs, friends, a home, even families; we all give something.

I was fortunate in that I gained far more than I lost. I wasn't kicked out of my home, I was able to go back to school—and my love life isn't half bad, either. But there were little things, like singing and swimming, that I had just thought were no longer a part of my life. Small price to pay, I thought. Then 2016 came along.

CAN MUSIC SAVE YOUR MORTAL SOUL?

I did always miss those days with me and my anime-nerd friends. Me, Momoko, and Ella singing along to Gackt, laughing with each other. There was a part of me that always wanted that feeling back. Over all the years I'd been gone from karaoke, I still sang and practiced at home; hitting the high notes, even wretchedly, helped transition my voice into its present husky-but-feminine register. I just kept singing at home like everyone else.

But my musical tastes had also broadened since my salad days. I found I could sing Marlene Dietrich's "Sag Mir Wo Die Blumen Sind" quite passably, or much of Nina Simone's "Sinnerman." Discovering and appreciating those women with their oceanic



LOUISA BERTMAN

voices helped me find a measure of confidence again. Singing is starkly gendered, but I began looking to the women who bent the rules and didn't kneel at soprano's altar.

In the years since, I'd become a technology critic, and my work took me to all manner of gaming conferences. At one of the largest, the Game Developers Conference in San Francisco, I unexpectedly found my chance to once again leap like the Fool. As one might expect from anything tech in San Francisco, GDC is festooned with boozy networking conferences and a blizzard of rapidly exchanged business cards. An old friend wanted to organize a party at a local bar for her colleagues and friends to just hang out without all the pressure of being "on the job." Business cards were banned. Talking shop was frowned upon.

Being an inveterate dork, all I can do sometimes is talk about work—since work so often includes everything I'm passionate about: video games, politics, sociology. But there was something at this party that could put my yap to better use: a karaoke machine.

I also felt safe here. Many outsiders don't know how large a queer scene there is in the world of game development, but suffice it to say I was hardly the only trans woman in the bar that night. This crowd was handpicked by my friend, who wasn't about to invite some boorish transphobe into her soiree. If there was any place I could get back on my game, it was here. I knocked back the cheap whiskey in my plastic cup and put my name down.

What song? I've often joked that my gender identity is "sad songs from the 1970s." So "American Pie" it was.

"Did you write the book of love, and do you have faith in God above..."

Well, I certainly had to that night.

But the results were happily banal. Some applauded and complimented me, some ignored me and focused on their conversations, others were just eagerly awaiting their turn. It was everything I could've hoped for. I was back. Just like that, I'd clawed back something I thought transition had taken from me forever. It was blessedly normal. ■



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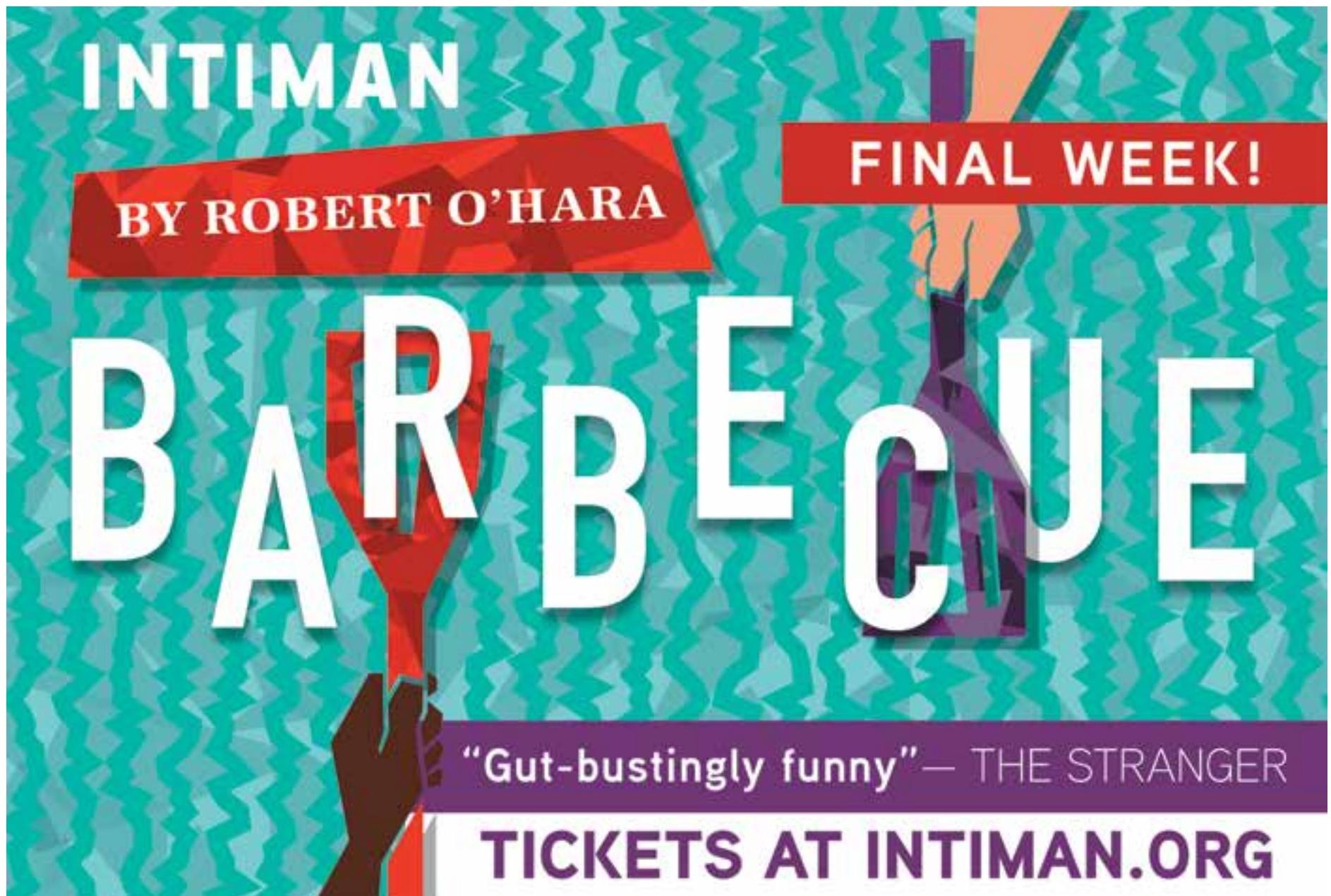
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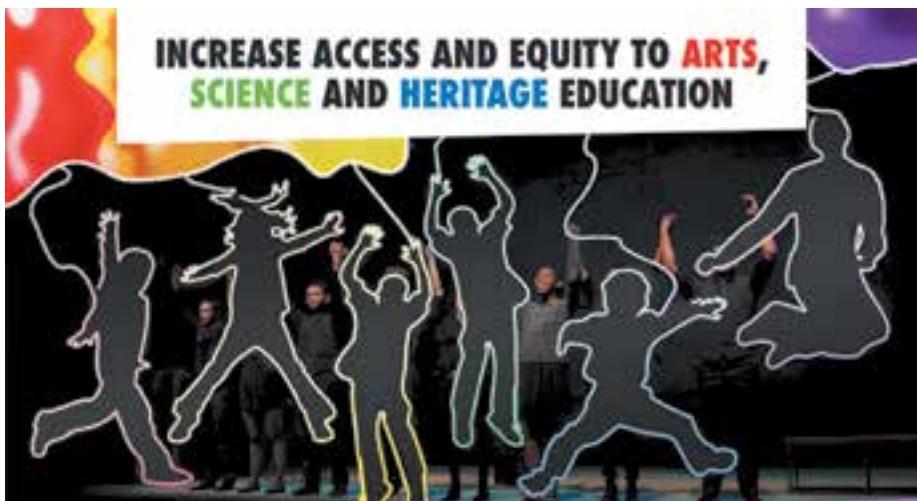
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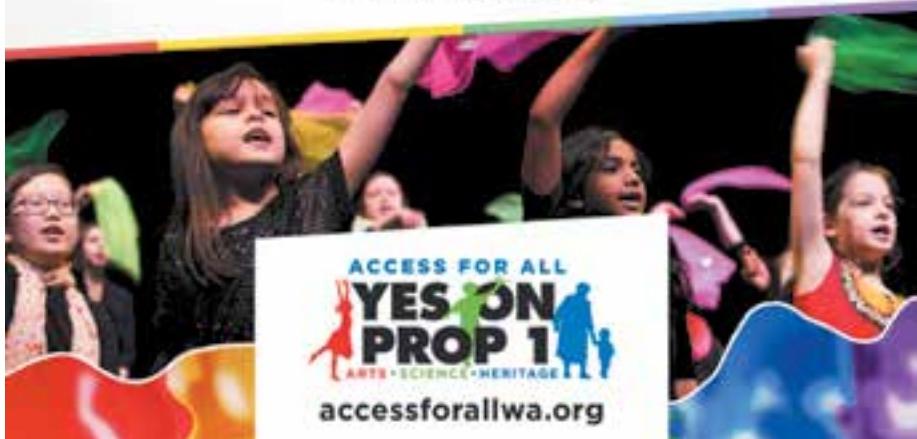
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Seattle Pride Parade
Sun June 25 Downtown

FESTIVALS

Family Pride & Queer Youth Pride

From 1-4 p.m., queer families are invited to express their joie de vivre on bouncy houses and hear Mrs. Phelps' kids choir and Drag Queen Storytime. After, from 4-7, queer youth will hold a poetry slam and a dance, with Cakes da Killa headlining at 6 and the inimitable Reverend Dollars on the console. *Cal Anderson Park, Sat June 24, 1-7 pm, free.*

Pride Parade

Show the queer and allied community's Indivisibility—this year's theme—at Seattle's 43rd Annual Pride Parade, which will run along Fourth Avenue. There will be more than 200 parade participants, including the Dykes That Ride at the front, plus announcers Abbey Roads, the Lady B, DonnaTella Howe, TylahMayJackson, Violet DeVille, Diva le Deviant, and Tricky D and D Dynasty of Dapper Down Productions. *Downtown, Sun June 25, 11 am, free.*

PrideFest Capitol Hill 2017

Kids, youth, and everybody else with a rainbow streak are welcome at this street festival that will include performances, arts and crafts, and a beer garden—as well as the Family Pride & Queer Youth Pride event in Cal Anderson Park. *Capitol Hill, Sat June 24, 12-8 pm, free.*

Seattle Dyke March & Rally

Rally to support queer womxn in Seattle, whatever your own sexuality or identity. A tradition since 1994, the Dyke March is a response to what they see as male domination of Pride: "The voices of the LGBTQ community and Pride weekend events have always been overwhelmingly male, so we reserve our stage to shine a spotlight on the experiences, pleasures, activism, and identities of queer women and dyke-identified people across the gender spectrum." After the rally—which will include speakers and performers including Seattle Womxn's March organizer Ebony Miranda, Youth Speaks Seattle poet Galaxy Marshall, and JusMoni—the march through Capitol Hill

will begin at 7 p.m. *Seattle Central College, Sat June 24, 5 pm, free.*

Seattle PrideFest 2017

PrideFest is the largest free Pride festival in North America, now in its 10th year. Featuring performances on three different stages from local and international touring acts like Mary Lambert and DoNormaal, this year's fest also has family-friendly activities and a "Queer Geeks & Gamers" zone. *Seattle Center, Sun June 25, 12-8 pm, free.*

Trans Pride Seattle 2017

The Trans Pride March will assemble at 5 p.m. and step off at 6 p.m. from Cal Anderson Park. It'll be immediately followed by a celebration back at the park, featuring speakers like Andrea Jenkins of the Transgender Oral History Project, host Adriana Torres of local non-profit Somos, and performances by Youth Speaks Seattle, Jade Dynasty of House of Luna, and Randy Ford of AU Collective from 7-10 p.m. *Capitol Hill, Fri June 23, 5 pm, free.*

LIVE MUSIC

Christeene and 'Da Boys, Sashay, DJ Mister Sister

While I do not usually condone FOMO, I highly suggest you not miss out on this train wreck of a shitshow. While it's always been hard to describe quite what exactly a Christeene is, I'll go with: Austin-based stank-terror-drag phenomenon in a sweat-matted fright wig and uncomfortably blue contacts. She makes hardcore electronic music/filthy dance pop (check her NSFAwesome videos online); the raunchy live show sometimes involves a giant cloth vagina, but will most definitely feature her more-than-half-naked backup dancers, T Gravel and C Baby, busting all the choreography. Expect a healthy dose of butt cheeks and take tomorrow off. **EMILY NOKES** *Crocodile, Fri June 23, 8 pm, \$12/\$15.*

Dear Queers Extravaganza

Queer musicians and artists unite for a Pride extravaganza, with live sets by local queer

Continued ▶

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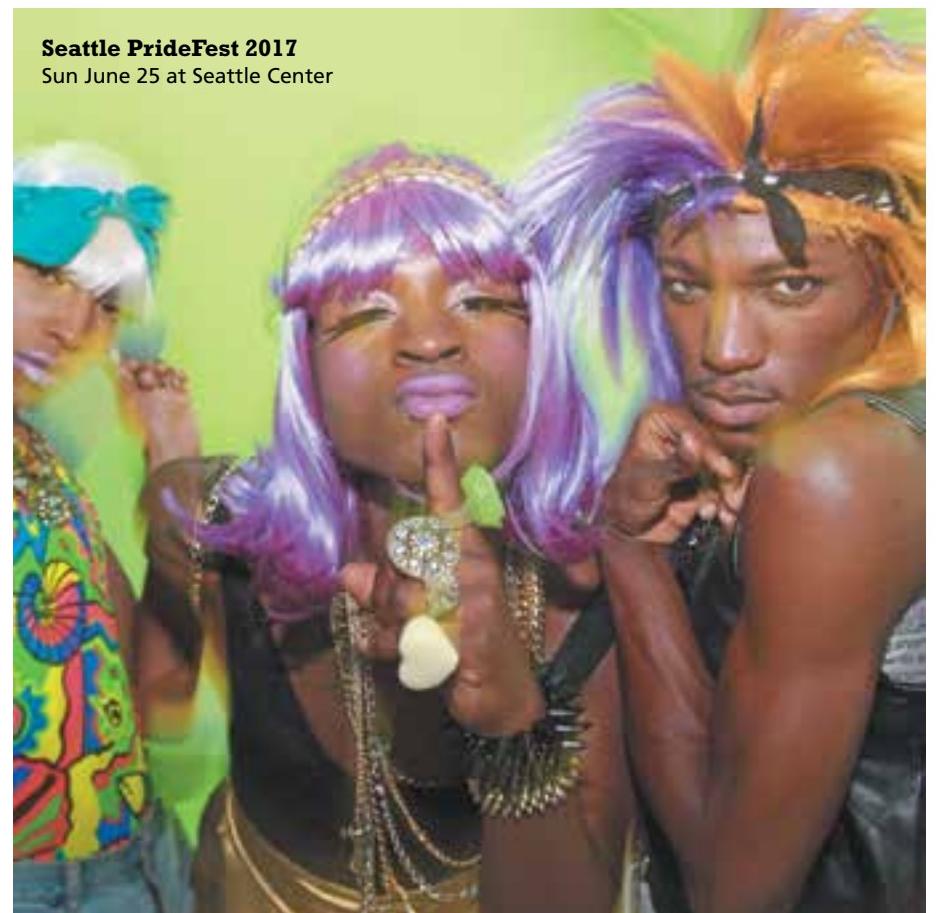
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THINGS TO DO PRIDE

Seattle PrideFest 2017

Sun June 25 at Seattle Center



KELLY O

groups Your Heart Breaks, Sundries, Moon Palace, Creature Hole, and Man Repellant. *Neumos*, Sun June 25, 5 pm, \$10.

La Bouche

The legendary dance music duo La Bouche—Lane McCray and Zsofia Farkas, who replaced Melanie Thornton (RIP)—will bring the Gay '90s roaring back at Chop Suey. Revisit some of the biggest hits of yesteryear's queer club scene with icons of the era. *Chop Suey*, Thurs June 22, 8 pm, \$27.50/\$30.

Seattle Pride Carnival (White Party)

Foundation promises the chicest queer nightclub party around with an acoustic set by Kiyomi Valentine, headliner Daniela Sea (The L-Word), and DJs Gunn Lundemo, Miss M, and Von Kiss. *Foundation*, Fri June 23, 9 pm-2 am, \$20-\$100.

T-ROX, Medusa Stare, L80, Shower Scum, and Jackie Hell

This Pride show will be headed by gender-fucking "butt rockers" Trannysaurus Rox, with opening bonkers acts by Shower Scum, L80, Medusa Stare, and Jackie Hell. *Highline*, Sat June 24, 9 pm-1 am.

Wildrose Pride

Seattle's best lesbian bar hosts a weekend of Pride events, starting off with Friday, June 23rd, with a night of party music—complete with a twerk contest”—DJ'd by Jay Hines. Saturday, June 24th, is the main event with Unique De'vine and Monique, Garlic Man & Chik'n, Pink Parts, and JWLB (formerly of YO MAJESTY!) plus DJs at a major street party that promises multiple bars and beer stations, photo booths, beer pong, pop-a-shot games, and a 15,000 square-foot beer garden. Sunday, June 25th, offers cool-down service in the form of games and music all night from DJs Cryspy, Toya B, and Mixtress. Weekend passes are \$36, and include food from Pettirosso, drink tickets, and entrance to all events. On Friday, bring your individual or season ticket to a Seattle Storm game to receive a discount of \$2 or \$4. *Wildrose*, June 23-25, \$15-\$25.

DJ

Bearracuda Seattle Gay Pride Upgraded with GROWLr

Join the Bearracuda crew and DJs Matt Stands and Matt Consola for a pre-Pride party, with good company and hot go-go boys. *Chop Suey*, Fri June 23, 9 pm, \$10.

BUTT DAY: Pride Edition

BUTT DAY is a free Thursday evening patio party that started in May and will go all summer long. The night is a space to let out all your weekday woes, with plenty of room to dance in the summer warmth to rotating musical styles of residents and new guests each week. This week is the pre-Pride weekend edition with a live performance from LA's MAARQUIL, and local support from DJs Riff Raff, BareBachus, Howlin 1000, and Gag Reflex. *Timbre Room*, Thurs June 22, 6 pm-2 am, \$8-\$12.

Dapper Down's Pride Takeover

Dapper Down Productions will pull out all the stops this year for Pride Takeover, including celebrity appearances by Buck Angel, Laith Ashley, and Arisce Walker, performances by Spikey Van Dyke, Skylar Armstrong, Miss Petite Coquette, and Tucker Noir, and live DJ sets by Reverend Dollars and DJ MIXX America. *Neumos*, Sat June 24, 6 pm-2 am, \$30/\$40.

Dickslap Pride 2017

This special Alternative Pride Festival version of the dickdickdickdick party will be hosted by Dolce Vida and "Official Tom of Finland Ambassador" and feature music by David Sylvester (FWB, PDX) and Cid&Fancy (Bottom Forty). Come for the toy giveaways, stay for the beard rubs and techno. *The Eagle*, Fri June 23, 8 pm-3 am, \$10.

DJ Bret Law

Keep Purr Pride rumbling on with local notable Bret Law serving hot, sweaty jams. *Purr Cocktail Lounge*, Fri June 23, 9 pm-2 am, \$5.

Escape!! All-Ages Queer Dance Party

After partying for hours at PrideFest, keep your queer feet in motion to tracks by top local DJs Reverend Dollars, Toya B, and Queermo (of Darqness). *Vera Project*, Sun June 25, 8 pm-midnight, \$5.

Continued ▶



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THINGS TO DO PRIDE

Fraktured

Fraktured is a Kremwerk night on Sundays centered on bringing the best in breakbeats to a Seattle audience, with drink specials like \$1 beers and \$4 shots. The Pride edition will feature special guests Trinitron, Julie Herrera, and Aurora Queen. *Kremwerk, Sun June 25, 9 pm-2 am, free.*

HouseQuake Pride! with Spaceotter, Mr. Linden, James Sorrell

Seattle Quake Rugby presents HouseQuake, a rowdy night of house music with selections by Spaceotter, Mr. Linden, and James Sorrell, plus dancing all night long with your favorite gay rugby boys in celebration of Pride weekend. *Timbre Room, Fri June 23, 10 pm, \$8/\$13.*

The Make Out Party: Pride Edition

James Cerne, Pure Noise, and Nark (Bottom Forty, Dickslap) will be laying down the tracks all night as you figure out the best way to ask your crush to make out (hot tip: free jello shots for loose lips). This event is part of the Alternative Pride Festival. *The Eagle, Sun June 25, 8 pm-3 am, \$10.*

Night Crush: PRIDE

Night Crush amps it up for their independent scrapper of a Pride party that thankfully has nothing to do with shilling vodka or street-side political clashes, and exists simply as a safe space for queers of all kinds to get wild over Pride. Sissy Elliott, Mykki Blanco's tour DJ, will grace the stage with their dance floor-ripping presence, while guest DJ KingDee and resident DJ Riff-Raff bring the sweat, and the seven-person gogo crew will keep the energy going. *Re-bar, Sat June 24, 9 pm-3 am, \$0-\$40 before 10pm/\$20 After 10pm.*

Pride: Divine with DJ Grind

Helmed by the legendary DJ Grind and

Seattle Dyke March & Rally

Sat June 24 at Seattle Central College



hosted by Verotica Events, this evening will be all about locating and releasing the god or goddess within, or just getting super drunk and dancing all night. Merge with the divine til the wee hours on the Foundation floor. *Foundation, Sat June 24, 9 pm-3 am, \$30/\$50.*

Pride: Enlisted with Cajmere Wray

Hosted by Verotica Events, Enlisted will be the kick-off party for their "Pride Extravaganza" weekend (which will also include Pride: Divine and Pride: Xtra). The theme is anything military, but the most important thing is that you show up and dance all night to the selections of Toronto's own DJ Cajmere Wray. *Capitol Lounge, Fri June 23, 10 pm-4 am, \$20.*

Pride with Sway & Swoon and Hella Black Hella Seattle

Dance queerly to DJ'd R&B, soul, funk, hiphop, and trap with Hotep and Stas Thee Boss. *The Cloud Room, Fri June 23, 6-10 pm, donation.*

Pride! X Names (Kate Moennig & Cam Grey), QBoy, Boulet Brothers

Celebrate Pride for a 13-hour stretch with celeb DJ duo X Names (Cam Grey and Kate Moennig of Uh Huh Her and *The L Word*, respectively) at the helm on the Kremwerk stage, and QBoy and Boulet Brothers holding it down on the Timbre Room stage, plus drag performances and local DJ support throughout. *Kremwerk, Sat June 24, 2 pm-3 am, \$20-\$200.*

Pride: Xtra with DJ Nick Bertossi

Join the crew of Verotica Events for Xtra, their first after-hours party, with Vancouver DJ Nick Bertossi on the decks, and looks, drinks, and moves going all night and all morning. *Kremwerk, Sunday June 25, 3-7 am, \$10/\$20.*

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THINGS TO DO PRIDE



Trans Pride Seattle 2017
Fri June 23 in Capitol Hill

Purr Pride Block Party

As part of its five-day Pride festival, Purr will unleash its all-day DJ onslaught with DJ Dana Dub, DJ Blacklow, and the Perry Twins. Dance for a few hours or dance from noon to deep night. *Purr Cocktail Lounge, Sat June 24, noon-2 am, \$25.*

Purr Pride Party

Wind up Purr Pride with drinks and a set by VJ Brandon Rust. *Purr Cocktail Lounge, Sun June 25, noon-2 am, free.*

SLAY: A Hip Hop Party for LGBT and People of Color

Recurring hiphop shindig Slay markets itself as a social justice movement, rather than just a party source, with an open encouragement to different minority communities to come together in a celebration of everyone's differences. Partial proceeds of the evening will be donated to a select charity that aligns with Slay's views. This evening will also be the Pride Edition of the series, so expect everything to be even bigger and queerer. *Neumos, Fri June 23, 9 pm, \$10.*

Summer of Love: Pony Pride 2017

Summer of Love: Pony Pride 2017 is finally here and will wreck everybody's body, heart, and brain. Friday is Rent Control, hosted by Ammonia and Americano with DJ Kkost and DJ Blank Eyes — free until 9 p.m. (then \$5 after). On Saturday, DJ Gag Reflex and DJ Barebacchus will be spinning all day for Luv' in the Afternoon (\$5 after 6 p.m.), starting at 4 p.m. Starting at 9 p.m. that same evening, Luv Ladder happens, with music by DJ Kirky and Dee Jay Jack and hosts Butylene O'Kipple and Harlotte O'Scara. On Sunday, enjoy the world's tiniest Tea Dance, hosted by Adé and Cookie Couture with DJ Sling Dion and DJ King of Pants — it goes all night, free before 3 p.m. *Pony, June 23-25, \$5.*

KARAOKE

Hula Hula Karaoke

Start singing and drinking early at Hula Hula. The bar opens at 10, so you'll have time to imbibe some liquid courage. Be sure to wear your Pride colors. *Hula Hula, Sat June 24, noon, free.*

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Bette, Babs, and Beyoncé

Seattle Men's Chorus will take on the ultimate legacies of three top-tier divas by

performing massive rock and pop hits and the contemporary classics of Broadway, to bring Bette Midler, Barbra Streisand, and Beyoncé Knowles to life. *McCaw Hall, Fri June 23, 8 pm, Sat June 24, 8 pm, \$25-\$75.*

DRAG

Amber Pride Party

Celebrate Pride at Amber, the self-proclaimed #1 nightclub in Seattle, with drink specials and contests throughout the afternoon, hosted by "Seattle's Latin Barbie," Klaudya Markos of the Markos Sisters. *Amber, Sun June 25, noon, free.*

ArtHaus: All-Stars!

Halfway Haus will host a dozen previous contestants from ArtHaus—a series in which teams of hilarious and artsy drag queens compete in a battle royale/dance party for bragging rights, shade throwing rights, and the right to play puppet master at the following year's Arthaus series—at this special showcase featuring Cookie Couture, Betty Wetter, Old Witch, Americano, Khloe5X, Heavy Scene Macaque, Sam I Am, Isis LaGarce, Mona Real, Chico Johnson, Uh-oh!, Hellen Tragedy, and Miss Texas 1988. *Timbre Room, Sat June 24, 7-10 pm, \$10/\$15.*

Cucci's Critter Barn: Pride Edition

Every month, drag goes off the tracks at Cucci's Critter Barn, hosted by Cucci Binaca herself. This special Pride edition will stun and startle with the talents of Butylene O'Kipple, Cookie Couture, Fine China, Hellen Tragedy, Jade Dynasty, and Shitney Houston. *Kremwerk, Fri June 23, 7 pm, \$9-\$75.*

Dragapalooza

Dragapalooza is described as "equal parts rock concert, variety show, and musical theater," and will feature local and not-at-all-local stars you'll recognize from (at the very least) *RuPaul's Drag Race*, including Sharon Needles, Trixie Mattel, Robbie Turner, and Derrick Barry. They'll sing with a live band led by Grammy-nominated producer Chris Cox. *SIFF Cinema Egyptian, Thurs June 22, 7 and 9:30 pm, \$25-\$500.*

Fierce Queen Pride Edition

See stars being born in the nebula known as Fierce Queen, a throw-down contest for new drag queens. Shitney Houston, currently enthroned Fierce Queen Mona Real, and Urethra Franklin will judge the funniest, fiercest ladies, and you dance your pants off

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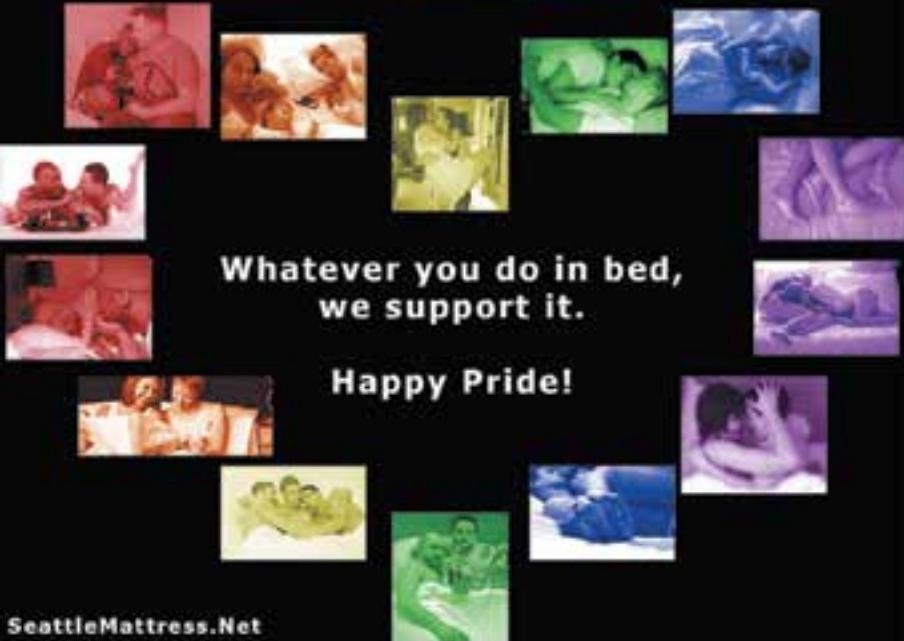
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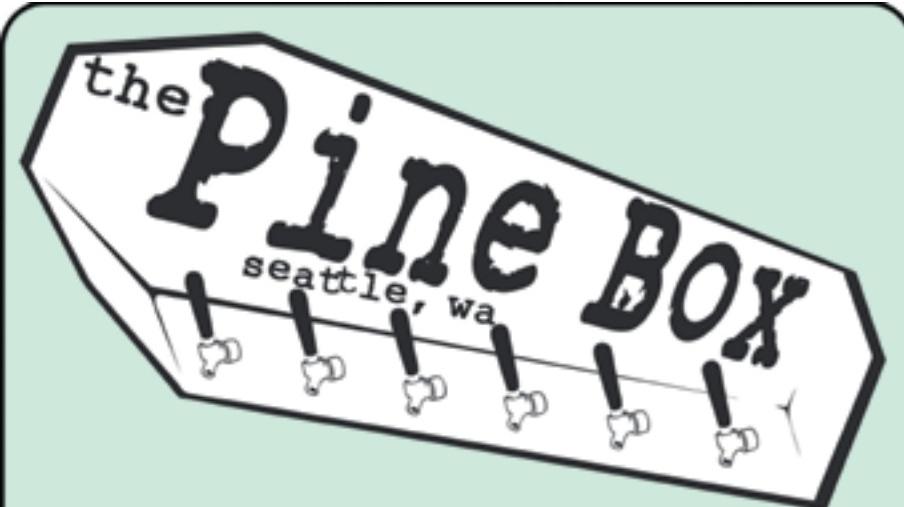
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THINGS TO DO PRIDE

before and after the contest. This event is part of the Alternative Pride Festival. Re-bar, Thurs June 22, 8 pm-2 am, \$12.

GetWoke: Queer and Trans People of Color Dance Party & Show

Celebrate the BIQTPOC community at #GetWoke, with live performances by Jade Sotomayor and Monica Beverly Hillz of *RuPaul's Drag Race*, hostess for the evening Monique Heart, and dance music by DJ Stunt Queen. Kremwerk, Thurs June 22, 9:30 pm-1 am, \$10.

Inferno: Seattle Pride Party

DJs WildFire and Lady Jane will be holding it down on the Neighbours dance floor (and in their basement lounge, if you're brave enough to venture down there) for this year's Inferno Pride Party. Just across the street, Portland DJ Jessica the Ripper will be soundtracking the Hot Flash companion party at Capitol Lounge. Each party is \$12, or \$20 if you're feeling the VIP vibes. *Neighbours*, Sat June 24, 6-10 pm, \$12.

Katya

Your Pride Thursday will be spent at Purr with Katya from *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Why? First off, there are rumors swirling that Purr is being priced out of its spot on 11th Avenue. Rumors are like drag queens in that they're usually made up of lies. Nevertheless, this may be your last Pride at Purr's current location. Secondly, Katya is a star and universally admired across drag scenes. (Yeah, straighties, there is more than one drag scene.) Her vibe is a mix of Archie McPhee, the movie Contact, and inappropriate things your stepmother told you over the holidays. Do those things not excite you? Then don't go see Katya. It won't be a safe space for you. CHASE BURNS Purr Cocktail Lounge, Thurs June 22, 9 pm-2 am, \$7.

KINGS: A Drag King Show

Flipping the traditional drag script, the Kings of Kremwerk will bring royalty to the stage, with a rotating monthly theme. For the PRIDE Edition, the Kings will perform impersonation numbers of their favorite stars and celebrities. Kremwerk, Sat June 24, 7-10 pm, \$10/\$15.

Linda's Pride Party

Now's your chance to see free drag from the likes of Stacey Starstruck, Kaleena Markos, Lucy Tealheart Paradisco, Londyn Bradshaw,

Dragapalooza
Thurs June 22 at
SIFF Cinema Egyptian



JASON KING

Abbey Roads, and Arson Nicki. Linda's Tavern, Sat June 24, 7 pm, free.

Mimosas with Mama

Eminent drag giantess Mama Tits will appear specially at the W after six months in Puerto Vallarta to perform her songs at a special brunch show. W Seattle, Sun June 25, 9 am, free.

Purr Pride Kickoff Party

Start off Purr Pride with the alluring Violet Chachki, winner of RuPaul's seventh season. Purr Cocktail Lounge, Wed June 21, 9 am-2 pm, free.

Queen4Queen Pride Edition

An exquisite lineup of Seattle queens (Cookie Couture, Jade Dynasty, Strawberry Shortcake, Khloe5X, and Queen of the Night Hydrangea Strangea) will paint the night bigger than life at this Pride Edition of Queen4Queen with stunning numbers, wild makeup, and sexy beats. Pony, Thurs June 22, 9 pm-2 am, free.

Rapture featuring Mike Servito, Evah Destruction & Ursula Major

Oh sure, you've been to more than your share of drag shows with lip-synching and wigs and princess gloves. But where are the fringed monsters, the viscous fluids, and the couture that you initially mistake for a pile of abandoned construction equipment? Kick-start your Pride with Rapture, hosted by unidentified frocking object Arson Nicki. Expect to see the avantest of the avant-garde creatures, peculiar performances, and a runway that may double as a portal to the Negaverse. You will be unable to forget any of what you see—or to make anyone believe that it happened. MATT BAUME Timbre Room, Fri June 23, 10 pm-3 am, \$10.

Unicorn Pride Show Tunes

Sing-A-Long

Tonight's the night to let the song in your heart burst forth, whether that song is from *Hamilton* or *South Pacific* or the musical version of *Hamlet* on that one episode of *Gilligan's Island*. Local chanteuses Isabella Extynn and Tipsy Rose Lee host a night of Broadway bawdiness, playing beloved clips and urging the ever-tipsier audience to belt along to the tunes. Relive your glory days of high school drama club, from rehearsal to

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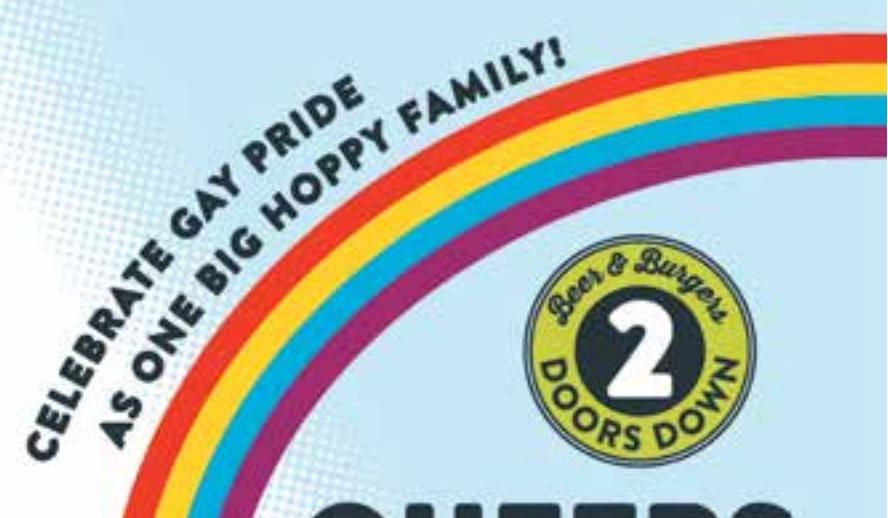
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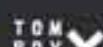
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JULY 27	SHAUN OF THE DEAD R/18+
with zombie burlesque halftime show <i>Music by Whorechata</i>	
AUG 3	WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS R/18+
Redhook staff pick! <i>Music by Yar</i>	
AUG 10	FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM PG-13*
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SUNTORY
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THINGS TO DO PRIDE

showtime to cast party all in one night. And remember—it's okay if you don't know all the lyrics to "Your Fault," because let's be honest, nobody truly does. **MATT BAUME** *Unicorn, Sat June 24, 6-9 pm.*

Weird: A Very Weird Pride Show

Join Miss Gay Seattle Londyn Bradshaw and Hellen Tragedy as they take a break from fundraising and get together simply to celebrate Pride Month. The June edition features live performances from local queens Old Witch and Indika Haze. *Kremwerk, Thurs June 22, 7 pm, \$7.*

PERFORMANCE

Gender*Fierce

Are you trans, queer, or an ally? If you're under 24, celebrate Pride with Aleksa Manila and other youth performers at this special variety show and resource fair. *Fred Wildlife Refuge, Sat June 24, free.*

Prismatic

Enjoy an immersive light show art, dance, acrobatics, and DJ'd music at this Subversionz Media show benefitting queer advocacy organizations. The final, Pride Weekend edition will feature Emma Curtiss on cyr wheel and Dream Frohe on aerial hoop, DJ Jedi boogie, and installation artist Mollie Bryan of Mokedo. *Apex Aerial Arts, Fri June 23, 8:30 pm, \$25-\$35.*

Schlóng Song

Woody Shticks, one of the interarts storyteller troupe known as the Libertinis, will put on a revival of his frenetic one-man show about "his days inside a Puritan cult" and "his nights inside consenting adults." *18th & Union, Fri-Sat, \$12-\$25.*

Seattle Theatresports!

It's the long-running late-night improv comedy shebang. June 16 is Pride Night. *Unexpected Productions' Market Theater, Fri-Sat, 10:30 pm, \$15.*

FOOD & DRINK

Celebrate Pride at Ozzie's

Party early and cheap with \$6 Smirnoff drinks, \$8 tequila shots, and \$5 Hop Valley drafts. *Ozzie's, Sun June 25, 10 am, free.*

Destination Dining with Pride

If you're looking to splurge on a truly memorable special occasion, consider the possibility of getting whisked away via seaplane to a secret location in the San Juan Islands. Once there, you'll work your way through six courses among a beautiful and unspoiled setting, and will make it back to Seattle by 8 p.m. Plus: a portion of the proceeds benefit Lifelong AIDS Alliance. *Secret location, Sat June 24, 2-8 pm, \$349.*

Dine with Pride

The Pride Foundation, which puts on the annual parade, has partnered with a bunch of awesome local restaurants to do a Dine Around-style prix-fixe special, with all proceeds going toward that big, crazy, festive parade we all love so much but rarely want to pay for. This two-birds-with-one-stone solution solves that problem, because we always want to eat delicious food from places like Pettirocco, Outlier, and Taylor Shellfish. Restaurants offer a \$15, \$25, or \$35 option, depending on what fits their style, and the money goes to making sure that, come Sunday, June 25, your streets will be filled with marching drag queens, dykes on bikes, and all manner of other LGBTQ people whose loudly proclaimed existence makes stodgy Republican dudes and closeted bros go into a tizzy

and start mumbling about "straight pride parades." **TOBIAS COUGHLIN-BOGUE** Various locations, through June 25, \$15/\$25/\$35.

Get Lei'd and Celebrate Pride

Enjoy \$5 Redhook Bicoastal IPAs and cocktail specials at the recently re-opened Hula Hula with your queer friends and allies. *Hula Hula, Thurs June 22, 9 pm-2 am, free.*

Pride Brunch—90's Queer Realness Edition

Celebrate Pride Month at Lost Lake with its two back-to-back pride brunches: "Queer Realness" Brunch on Saturday, complete with a DJ set from Bossy Rhymes, queer summer anthems, and select movies like *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar*, and *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* on all of the TVs. Sunday's "Summer Camp-y Brunch" will feature cult classics *Wet Hot American Summer* and *But I'm a Cheerleader*, as well as limited-edition Pride shirts and stickers. Food specials will include the "LGBTQ Sandwich," (with lettuce, guac, bacon, tomato, and cheese), and Funfetti Rainbow Pancakes. Drinks include "Taste the Rainbow" jello shots, rainbow milkshakes, and rainbow sangria with confetti fruit and a rainbow straw. In case you can't make it to either brunch, Lost Lake is also a participating restaurant in Dine with Pride. Head there any day for a sandwich, fries and draft beer—all for \$15. *Lost Lake Cafe & Lounge, Sat June 24, 9 am-3 pm, Sun June 25, 9 am-3 pm.*

Pride Day Brunch

LGBTQ youngsters (11-22) and their older siblings and parents are invited to start out Pride Day with a convivial breakfast/brunch. *Lambert House, Sun June 25, 9 am.*

Pride Kickoff Celebration

Join Fremont Brewing in its spacious beer garden for a Pride Month celebration—they'll have two Pride Kolsch infusions on tap, and four-packs available to take home. *Fremont Brewing Company, Thurs June 22, 5-9 pm, free.*

Pride Pre-Funk

Bolster your energy (or inebri-energy) for Pride with \$15 bottomless mimosas, \$5 "Proud Marys," a photo contest, and brunch at Heyday. *Heyday, June 24-25, 8 am, free.*

Rooftop Brunch

Grab drinks or tuck into brunch at this free Pride pre-cruise party on a rooftop overlooking downtown and the waterfront. Gay City will be accepting donations onsite at this event that's part of the Seattle Alternative Pride Festival. *MBar, Sat June 24, 11 am-2 pm, free.*

Rooftop Happy Hour

Climb to the top of the Thompson Hotel for some drinks and a great view at this Alternative Pride Festival happy hour featuring DJ R-Pal. Try the Flamingo: Some of the sales from this drink will benefit Gay City. *The Nest, Fri June 23, 6-9 pm, free.*

PARTIES

The Annual Pride Cruise 2017

What's more fun than Pride? Pride on a boat with Nark magazine, KEXP Riz Rollins and dj ShmeeJay (on the first boat) or Brian Lyons and Baby Sam Deejay (on the second boat). The boats leave at 3 p.m. sharp, so bring your rugged seafarer good looks and don't be late. This event is part of the Alternative Pride Festival. *The Islander Cruise Ship, Sat June 24, 2-6 pm, \$28.50.*

Continued ▶

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THINGS TO DO PRIDE

Christeene and 'Da Boys
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KELLY O

Big Gay Dog Prom

It's time for your pooch to dress up extra-fancy and frolic for the joy of Pride and doghood. Humans can gather for coffee, drinks, dancing, and good dog company in a rainbow-and-unicorn-themed party space. Pups must be House of Ruff members (and to be clear, we are talking dog-dogs, not human dogs), but all furless, bipedal mammals are welcome. *House of Ruff, Thurs June 22, 6-9 pm, \$10.*

Pink Party PrideFest

Get real wild femme-style at the Pride edition of the Pink Party with DJ Krot and Toya B of Darqness. This is part of the Queer Geeks and Gamers Convention. *Fisher Pavilion, Sat June 24, 9 pm-midnight, free.*

Pride Is for Everyone

Go mad with love for the LGBTQ+ universe and its limitless expressions at this all-night, two-stage bash hosted by Britt Brutality, Rusty Nails, and Bucket and produced by Nark magazine. Futurewife, One Love (Riz Rollins and Rob Green), Wesley Holmes, Sean Majors, Bottom Forty, and many, many others will queer the consoles. See fetish demos and interactive art as dancers keep the movement going for eight consecutive hours. Best of all, your dollars will help out Gay City's health program. They add, "This party is a rebellion against the aspects of nightlife that do not commonly involve the hard working local talent of all genders, shapes, sizes, colors and backgrounds!" This event is part of the Alternative Pride Festival. *Secret location, Sat June 25, 10 pm-4 am, \$20.*

Pride Pizza Party: Hot Queer Sex Tips

A gooey party for shy and curious queers, this get-together at the neighborhood sex shop offers free pizza, cocktails, good advice, and the chance to win a dildo and harness. *Babeland, Sat June 24, 7 pm, free.*

Trans Pride Afterparty

Trans Pride will live on all year—but especially festively at this party after the Trans Pride March, where there'll be music and fun to benefit the Gender Justice League. *Vermillion, Fri June 23, 9 pm-2 am, \$10 suggested donation.*

What the Float

Defined as a "private dance party in public space," What the Float provides you with a headphone-sourced sonic experience and silent disco that take you through the city, track by track. This edition is brought to you by Forward Flux Productions. *Various locations, Fri June 23, 8-11:30 pm, \$10-\$25.*

XL Bear Bust: Body Pride

If you're big and hairy (or love those that are), dress your skimpiest and head over to C. C. Attle's, stay till midnight, and then follow the herd over to Chop Suey and Diesel. *C. C. Attle's, Sat June 24, 8 pm-2 am, free.*

COMMUNITY

19th Annual Rainbow Health Fair

Get tested, massaged, enrolled in healthcare, and more at this trans- and women-focused health fair featuring "traditional and holistic health services and education," plus prizes. *Gay City, Sun June 25, 11 am-5 pm, free.*

LGBTQ Youth Pride

If you're a queer youth aged 11-22, stop by for games, new friends, and Dinner with Divas at 6 p.m. Kids 11-12 need a signed parent/guardian consent form. If you've been to Lambert House twice or more before June 24, you're older than 12, and you sign up in advance, you can also take part in the Pride Sleepover. *Lambert House, Sat June 24, 4-9:30 pm, free.*

GAMING

Queer Geeks and Gamers Convention

Is there enough queer geekiness in your life? The answer is always NO, but you can make some headway at this convention, which will offer a cosplay contest, exhibits, the femme-centric Pink Party, and of course games—board, video, and arcade. *Fisher Pavilion, Sat June 24, 5 pm-midnight, Sun June 25, 12-8 pm, free.*

SPORTS & RECREATION

Pride SWAT+ Pride AzuQar!

Start out with a dramatic women's arm wrestling contest—you can compete or just watch—and then dance out your kinks with AzuQar, a queer Latinx dance night hosted by the Wonder Twins, Julie Herrera, and Mz ArTiz, plus special guest Irene Legaspi. The tournament starts at 8 p.m., and dancing begins at 10. *Re-bar, Fri June 23, 7-10 pm.*

Prom Dress Rugby

Whether you want to see the tough rugby players of Quake and the Emerald City Mudhens duke it out in prom dresses (men) and tuxes (women—we suppose genderqueer players can take their pick) or you'd like to

**Big Gay Dog Prom**

Thurs June 22 at House of Ruff

MICHAEL DOUCETT

join in the ruckus, head to Cal Anderson Park for some scrumming fun. *Cal Anderson Park, Sat June 24, 2-4 pm, donation.*

Seattle Pride Quads Grass Volleyball Tournament

Show off your muscly arms at this tournament to benefit the Kraken VC Volleyball Scholarship fund, which provides volleyball to inner-city kids. *Judkins Park, Sat June 24, 8 am-7 pm, \$30.*

Seattle Reign FC vs. FC Kansas City

Watch the Seattle Reign take on FC Kansas City. Will they keep up the momentum from their shutout of May 27th against the Houston Dash? It's also Pride Night. *Memorial Stadium, Sat June 24, 7 pm, \$19-\$200.*

Seattle Sounders FC vs. Orlando City SC

Watch two soccer teams from two pretty gay cities take each other's measure. This night is Pride Night! *CenturyLink Field, Wed June 21, 7:30 pm, \$43-\$90.*

Seattle Storm vs. Phoenix Mercury

See the Storm battle the Phoenix Mercury with a special Pride tipoff. *KeyArena, Fri June 23, 7 pm, \$10-\$75.*

READINGS & TALKS**History Café: Queer Resistance and Activism in Seattle**

In this edition of History Café, UW PhD candidate Kevin McKenna will explore the history of local LGBTQ activism. *Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI), Wed June 21, 6:30-7:30 pm, free.*

REAL TALK: LGBTQ Conversations for Change

Seattle Pride will host a conversation highlighting queer perspectives on safety, police relations, "pride, racism, and nationalism in LGBTQ communities," with three queer performers of color—Monique Heart, Jade Sotomayor (*RuPaul Season 1*) and Monica Beverly Hillz (*RuPaul Season 5*) and moderation by Randall Jensen, an anti-violence activist and the director of SocialScope Productions. *Frye Art Museum, Thurs June 22, 5-8:30 pm, free.*

What She Said

LGBT women will share their success stories and tales of adversity. The speakers will include Danni Askini of the Gender Justice League, Beth Barrett of SIFF, Pulse lube dispenser CEO Amy Buckalter, and restaurateur Dani Cone. *W Seattle, Wed June 21, 5:30-7:30 pm, free.*

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SweatBox Teacher Mary. Photo by Alex Berry

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NEWS



BOB HASEGAWA Probably vapes more than any other state senator.

THE STRANGER

The Veteran

State Senator Bob Hasegawa Wants to Take Years of Legislative Experience to the Bank

BY ANA SOFIA KNAUF

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the fourth of six profiles of 2017 mayoral candidates we will be publishing before the Stranger Election Control Board announces its endorsements.

"Do you mind if I vape while we talk?" asks the Washington State senator as he sits down for an interview.

He takes a long drag from his palm-sized tobacco vaporizer. When he exhales, the air smells cloyingly of artificial banana bread.

Bob Hasegawa is wearing a faded Seattle Mariners T-shirt and shorts. His dining-room table is mostly covered with scattered papers and open binders. His campaign manager sits beside me writing e-mails and darting out of the room to answer phone calls.

"In the legislature, I'm realizing I'm just one of 147 legislators to make policy," Hasegawa says of his decision to enter the Seattle mayor's race just six months after being reelected to the state senate. "It gets frustrating sometimes trying to, at the same time, be the voice for communities of color, for working families, and labor and environmental issues—all those things I've been fighting for all these years."

Hasegawa, a Democrat, has represented South Seattle, Tukwila, Renton, and Kent—among the most racially diverse cities in the state—in Olympia for nearly two decades. First elected to the Washington State House of Representatives in 2005, Hasegawa eventually convinced voters to put him in the state senate in 2013.

As a state senator, Hasegawa pushed for progressive policies, successfully getting fellow legislators onboard to add racial-impact statements to proposed bills and advocating for a capital gains tax while opposing massive

tax breaks for Boeing. He also served as a begrudging light rail expansion supporter, earning the ire of some pro-transit wings that criticized him for pushing a false narrative that Sound Transit misrepresented the cost of the project.

"To try to make change in there has been frustrating," he says after exhaling another plume of vapor. "It's been mostly a defensive game in the legislature. I think, as city mayor, it would be less about defense and more about actually trying to implement a vision for Seattle."

But that vision is unfocused—and it wasn't just the miasma of sweet smoke filling the room.

As Seattle mayor, Hasegawa wants to create a municipal bank to help fund city projects to address current crises, including homelessness and housing affordability. Establishing a publicly owned bank has been Hasegawa's pet issue for years. In 2011, Hasegawa, then a state representative, submitted a house proposal to create a state-owned bank to fund projects across Washington. (The bill, possibly the least sexy issue in Olympia, died for the fifth consecutive legislative session this year.)

Now Hasegawa is bringing his wonky proposal to Seattle, convinced a municipal bank could "make money for the taxpayers" and "vastly increase our financing capacity" for Seattle projects. He views a city bank as a panacea of sorts for all of our economic woes. Expanded financing, coupled with rent control, Hasegawa said, could help build public housing units for low-income and formerly homeless people and help "invest back into local communities."

Additionally, funds could be used to provide

renters with short-term bridge loans to pay rent when they are at risk of eviction. While landlords have "a legitimate need to collect the rent they're owed," city officials must "try to keep people in their homes" to prevent them from slipping into homelessness, he says.

"People forget we're one of the wealthiest cities in one of wealthiest countries in the world," Hasegawa says. "There's no reason for us to have this livability inequity in our city... We have to recapture wealth to rebuild the system for everyone."

Before diving into politics, Hasegawa represented truck drivers during his time as secretary-treasurer of the Pacific Northwest's Teamsters 174. Hasegawa empathizes with struggling working-class families in which "everyone under the roof [is] scrambling to try to make ends meet... so they don't get kicked out of their house," he says.

Hasegawa, like many lifelong Seattleites, is nostalgic for a mythical "old Seattle." But it seems the senator isn't entirely familiar with some of the biggest issues our city faces today.

Asked about his stance on the \$210 million plan to rebuild the King County Youth Detention Center, Hasegawa said he needed "to learn more about it, hear what the community feels about it." Opposition to the detention center, which King County voters approved for reconstruction in 2012, inspired the vocal #NoNewYouthJail movement, which led several protests in the last year. When asked in June about his stance on the detention center, Hasegawa said he "didn't really have a chance to follow up."

"I don't know the specifics of the plan, but I'm not a fan of incarcerating kids," he said. (Hasegawa added that detention should be used only for kids who have committed "serious" crimes and that "crimes of survival" such

as shoplifting should not be jailable offenses.)

During a mayoral candidate panel on June 14, Hasegawa also floundered when asked for his position on rapid rehousing, which would provide formerly homeless people with rental assistance vouchers. Rather than addressing the question, Hasegawa rambled about the need for a state bank without addressing the program.

The following week, when *The Stranger* asked again about his thoughts on rapid rehousing, Hasegawa said city officials should focus on building public housing after engaging neighborhood residents who live near the public housing units. To simply "parachute" programs into communities, particularly those that are underrepresented, "is kind of indicative of the problem with the government right now. It's all top-down [governance]," Hasegawa said.

"We need to be able to provide immediate shelter for everybody who needs it," he said. "Just focusing on the transitional, immediate needs, it's like putting a Band-Aid on the gouge, on the underlying problem. Once that runs out, what happens?"

At a time when the Washington State Senate is essentially split between Democrats and Republicans, should Hasegawa, a strong advocate for progressive issues, really leave the statehouse to lead "progressive" Seattle?

"They don't want to lose me in the state senate," said Hasegawa, who prides himself on his ability to reach across the aisle to create bipartisan legislation. "It's flattering, but I really do think I can use my organizing skills and administrative skills to much greater [effect] by leading Seattle in a new direction. We can be a shining example to the rest of the state."

State representative Sharon Tomiko Santos, whose district also includes parts of Seattle, said Hasegawa's aim to "put the lens of social and economic justice" on legislation is valuable in the midst of the latest wave of gentrification sweeping Seattle.

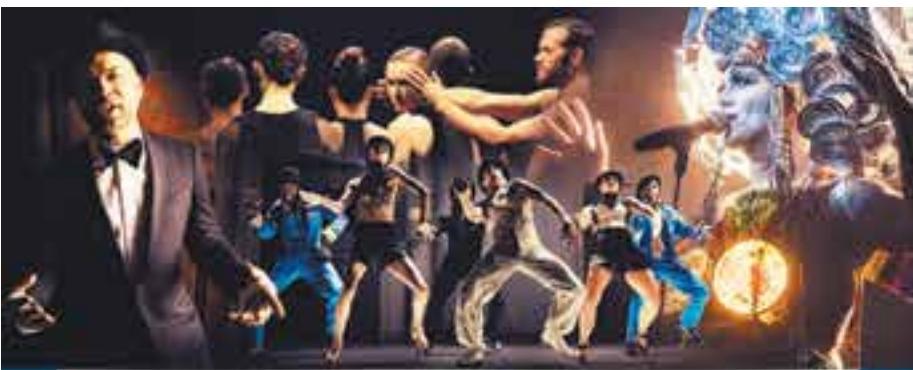
"He is a champion of issues involving income inequality [and] pertaining to people who are marginalized or disenfranchised, particularly within communities of color," Santos said. "He's such a strong believer in moving things from the grassroots up. Bob's vision is really to turn back to empowering individuals in their neighborhoods to make decisions for themselves."

Hasegawa began working double duty after announcing his candidacy in May, moving back and forth between Seattle and Olympia where the senate is in special session. Because he is a sitting state legislator, Hasegawa cannot receive donations for his current campaign. Instead, the mayoral hopeful spends his off-hours schmoozing at events.

On June 17, the senator is about two hours too early for Block Party at the Station, a neighborhood hiphop and arts festival. With a coffee in hand, Hasegawa introduces himself to other early risers who are setting up for the afternoon's events: community organizers, business owners, artists, and two high-school debate team members who request a selfie.

After dodging a pair of burly roadies setting up the stage, Hasegawa talks at length about housing affordability with an arts community organizer. He later takes a few minutes to compliment a group of farmers from Carnation on their pots of healthy tomato plants.

Two of the mayoral hopeful's campaign aides and I watch amused from a few booths away. One of them laughs about the difficulties of going to events with Hasegawa. "He wants to talk to everyone," the other says. "And he's genuinely interested. He could talk all day." ■



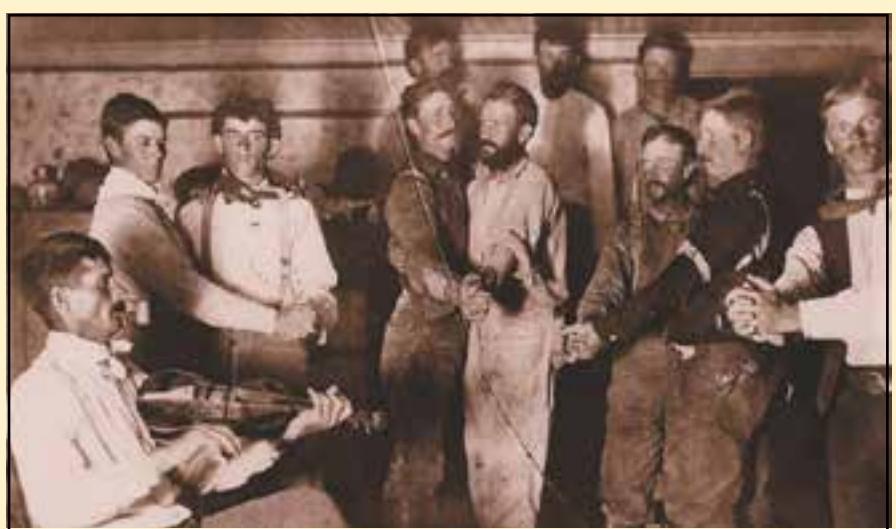
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The Prosecutor

Jenny Durkan Embraces Her Place in the Establishment

BY HEIDI GROOVER

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the fifth of six profiles of 2017 mayoral candidates we will be publishing before the Stranger Election Control Board announces its endorsements.

At a mayoral candidate forum held in a dimly lit building behind a Capitol Hill church, former US Attorney and candidate for mayor Jenny Durkan takes her first question: Does she support a city income tax?

"I think an income tax is critical," says Durkan. "I think the city council is right to move forward and see whether we can test the law."

It's a notable shift in tone from a much more skeptical take on the same question when she kicked off her campaign a month earlier. The change is emblematic of the calculating candidate who knows when to tack left and when to embrace Seattle's political establishment, even as other candidates sprint in the other direction.

With \$191,000 in her war chest and big endorsements like the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce's PAC, Durkan is the favorite to make it through the August 1 primary. She speaks the language of Seattle politics: pragmatism, consensus, incremental progress. The same strategy won current mayor Ed Murray the seat in 2013 and looked likely to win him an easy reelection until allegations of sexual abuse surfaced this spring. That's no coincidence. Durkan's political consultant used to work for Murray, and 19 percent of her money has come from people who previously donated to the mayor.

She has become the face of maintaining the status quo. But for many in Seattle, more of the same will not be enough.

In a city attracting young tech workers, the income gap among twentysomethings is widening. Home prices hit a record high this year and rents continue to rise.

As the city has tried to address these issues, the scale of the problems has far outpaced some of the solutions. In 2016, Seattle voters doubled a housing levy to build or preserve 2,150 apartments for low-income people. But at last count, about 8,500 people lived in shelters or on the streets in Seattle.

Durkan, 59, is making her first run for public office, but she's not new to local circles of power. Her father was an influential state legislator. Her brother is a local lobbyist who works for advertisers and landlords, according to city documents. Jenny Durkan has long been—and remains—a close friend and counsel to the family of former governor Christine Gregoire.

Durkan says her father's career centered politics in her childhood. She remembers him meeting with farm-worker advocates and members of the Black Panthers, who marched on the Capitol in Olympia in 1969. "In lots of families, the rule is you never talk about politics and religion at the dinner table," Durkan says in an interview at a downtown cafe. "That's all we talked about."

After getting an undergraduate degree, Durkan spent two years working with indigenous people in Alaska as part of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps before going to law school. After law school, she worked in criminal defense for several high-powered law firms in Seattle and Washington, DC.

Kari Tupper remembers Durkan not as a lawyer for the powerful, but for the vulnerable. In 1987, US senator Brock Adams allegedly drugged and sexually assaulted Tupper. As Tupper, whose family was close with the Democratic senator, endured a hot media spotlight and public attacks from the senator and his supporters, Durkan took her case pro bono.

"She believed me from the beginning," Tupper says today, her voice cracking. "There was never any question."

In 1992, eight other women came forward in a *Seattle Times* story with similar stories about Adams. The senator dropped his bid for re-election. Tupper felt vindicated, and on the night the story dropped, she says Durkan celebrated with her. It was one of the few times she saw Durkan cry.

Durkan became a household name in 2005 when she represented the state Democratic Party when Republican gubernatorial candidate Dino Rossi challenged his narrow loss to Christine Gregoire. (The Democrats prevailed.) In 2009, Barack Obama appointed Durkan as US Attorney, making her the first openly gay person to hold the job. As US Attorney, she created a civil-rights unit in her office. She won praise for prosecuting cyber-crime and would-be terrorist Ahmed Ressam, who was convicted of planning to bomb the Los Angeles Airport.

Not all of her cases were popular, though, particularly on Seattle's far left. In 2012, Durkan's office led an investigation of several people jailed for refusing to testify about vandalism during May Day protests. Federal investigators attempted to compel four people not present at the protests to testify about local property damage. When they refused, they were sent to jail. The search warrant for one of the three said FBI agents were looking for, among other things, black clothing and "anti-government or anarchist literature." Eventually, after they continued to refuse to testify, they were freed.

In the wake of the financial crisis, Durkan's office did not file criminal charges against executives from Washington Mutual over that bank's collapse.

In 2013, her office prosecuted Abu Khalid Abdul-Latif, later convicted of plotting to attack a military facility in Seattle. The case involved a convicted sex offender who worked as an informant and, along with a police detective, deleted text messages that should have been preserved. Federal judge James Robart called that destruction of evidence "at-best sloppy."

Jeff Robinson, the current deputy legal director at the American Civil Liberties Union (though he spoke to *The Stranger* only in his personal capacity) calls Durkan "one of my closest friends in the entire world." He says as US Attorney, Durkan "definitely approved of sentences I thought were too severe" and, like many other federal prosecutors, pursued drug cases he opposed. "But one of the things I always knew was she was doing what she honestly believed to be the right thing," Robinson says. "And that's why I respect her so much."

In the campaign for mayor, Durkan highlights her work on police reform. While it's true that Durkan didn't oppose the federal consent decree that has helped lead to reforms at the Seattle Police Department, community organizations were also key in bringing the Department of Justice to town. The ACLU of Washington and others urged the Feds to investigate Seattle police as early as 2010. And Durkan's relationship with reformers has had

rough patches. In the early days of the consent decree, Durkan scolded local reformer Lisa Daugaard in a public meeting, telling her, "You don't own the community."

After Durkan stepped down as US Attorney in 2014, some wondered if she hoped for a spot in an eventual Hillary Clinton cabinet, perhaps even attorney general. She went to work for Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan, a firm with offices in Washington, DC, and Seattle, where she has focused on cybersecurity. FIFA hired her in 2015 to represent the organization as it battled corruption charges. Earlier this year, she represented the Muckleshoot Tribe during the inquest into the fatal police shooting of Renee Davis.

As mayor, Durkan says she would address the city's homelessness crisis by opening more emergency shelter beds across the city, increasing outreach to people living in cars and RVs, and coordinating more closely with the county to provide services.

She supports the housing affordability plan charted by Murray's Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda task force (known as HALA), which will implement a series of up-zones across the city where new developments must set aside space for affordable housing or pay a fee.

On policing, Durkan supports the package of reforms recently passed by the city council and promises to ensure full compliance with the consent decree.

But the candidate does not have a signature issue. The closest her campaign has come to carving out a cogent message is running against the Trump administration. But the primary will be a test of just how much that message resonates. In Seattle's political landscape, where elected officials trip over themselves to be part of "the resistance" while their city struggles with a growing economic divide, promising to fight Trump is not exactly unique.

"In lots of families, the rule is you never talk about politics and religion at the dinner table," Durkan says. "That's all we talked about."

bring them to the table.

The Murray-like middle-road strategy could work. The last time Seattle picked a mayor, just 52.5 percent of registered voters turned out. Most of them lived in the city's whiter, wealthier neighborhoods.

At the candidate forum on Capitol Hill, the mayoral hopefuls take a question about their donors. Have they received money from corporations, developers, or people who live outside the city? And do they think that reflects what Seattleites want?

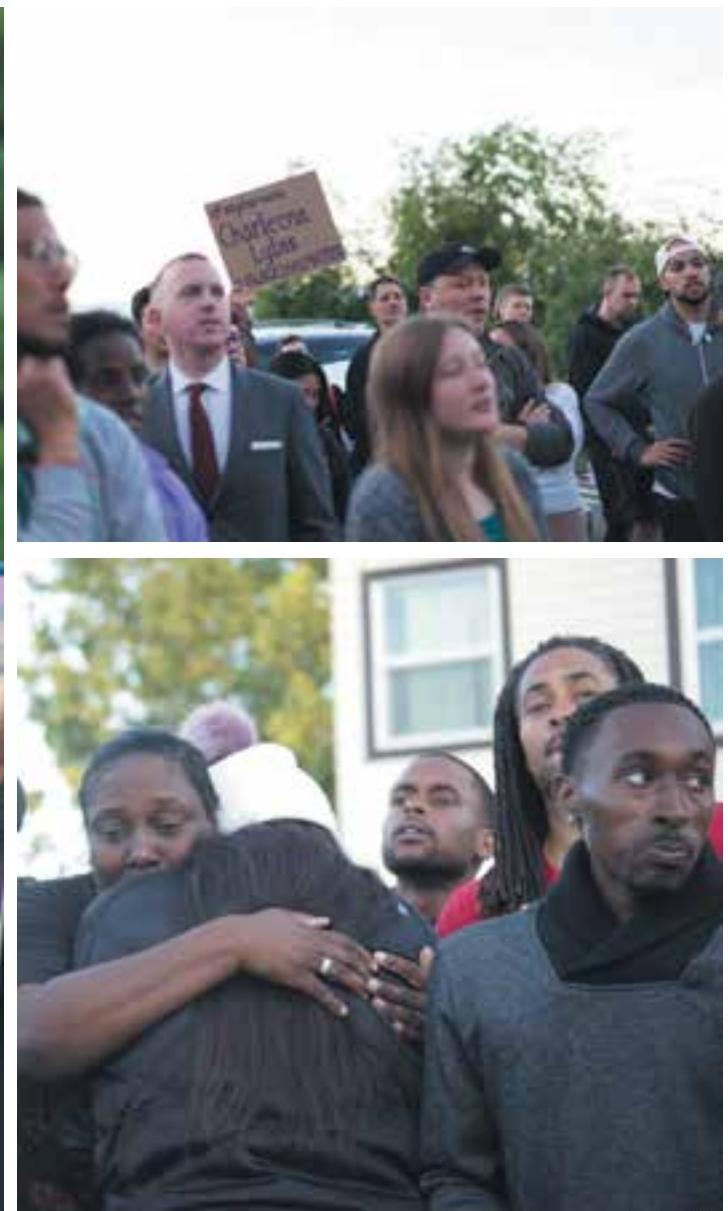
"I don't know about corporations because I don't look at the list," Durkan says. "I assume I've gotten it from developers and people who—" Some in the crowd interrupt her with boos, but she presses on. "I've also got it from working people," she says. "And, I'll tell you, if people give me money, they know they're giving it to me because of my values and what I care about and the city I want."

"Corporate!" someone in the crowd shouts. Other candidates might have been rattled—but Durkan continues, unfazed. ■





VIGIL Family and supporters gathered to honor Charleena Lyles, who was shot by Seattle Police.



CHLOE COLLYER

“Life of the Party”

Friends and Family Honor

Charleena Lyles, Black Mother Fatally Shot by Seattle Police

BY STEVEN HSIEH

Those close to Charleena Lyles will tell you she exuded energy. “She was the life of the party,” said Trina Washington, a cousin who knew Lyles since she was 12 years old. The two were inseparable.

“She liked to go out. She liked to dance and sing. She was one of those people who would always be moving around like ‘Heeey!’” said Monika Williams, Lyles’s older sister, snapping her finger and forcing a smile between sobs.

Domico Jones remembers Lyles, his older sister, chasing him and his siblings around their home in Seattle. “She was hella fast. She ran faster than she looks,” he said, sitting near the housing complex where she lived, overlooking baseball fields on a cloudy Father’s Day.

On Saturday, June 17, Lyles attended a birthday party for Williams’s daughter. The child’s birthday was in May, but the celebration was delayed by a string of murders that claimed friends and family members.

After the party, Williams asked Lyles to spend the night at her house. But Lyles needed to go back to her Sand Point apartment to look after her son. One of Lyles’s daughters went home with Williams.

“I took my niece,” Williams said, shaking her head. “Thank God I took my niece to my auntie’s house so she could stay the night with my other cousin.”

The next day, right around 10 a.m., Lyles’s life came to an abrupt end.

Two Seattle police officers responded to a burglary call from Lyles, who told officers that someone had taken an Xbox from her home. The audio, taken from an officer’s dashcam, cuts in and out.

“Hey! Get back! Get back!” one of the officers can be heard shouting. “We need help,” one of the officers, maybe the same one, says into a radio. Movement. A child’s cry. Then: Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang.

The final seconds of Charleena Lyles’s life. She was 30 years old; she had four children and a fifth was on the way.

Over the coming days and months and years, Seattle will review those fateful minutes and seconds. Police investigators will look at the evidence, which includes dashcam audio and video from hallway cameras. Protesters will demand accountability for yet another police shooting of a black American by white officers.

Seattle Police Department officials say Lyles brandished a knife before the shots went off. Lyles’s family question why the officers resorted to deadly force. “Even if my sister had a knife in her hand, she weighs like nothing, even if she’s soaking wet,” Williams told *The Stranger*. “There’s no way you could have taken a Taser and taken her down? There’s no way you could have taken a baton

and knocked the knife out of her hand?”

On the evening of Sunday, June 18, at a vigil outside Brettler Family Place, the apartment complex where Lyles lived with her children, family members raised those questions again. Andre Taylor, the brother of Che Taylor, a black man who was fatally shot by police in 2016, announced a police-accountability initiative called Deescalate Washington that addresses mental-health and first-aid training for police officers.

About 200 Seattleites attended the gathering, some holding signs with calls to “say her name.”

“We can make sure she didn’t die in vain by bringing accountability to this state,” Taylor shouted, adding that James Bible, the same attorney who represented Taylor’s family,

will also represent Lyle’s.

Alongside the demands for justice, family members used the occasion to remember Charleena Lyles’s life. Photos of her and her kids stood upright on chairs. Tea candles laid out on the sidewalk spelled out the name Lyles used with friends and family: Leena.

Family members didn’t shy away from Lyles’s history with mental-health issues. They also told the crowd that she had been in abusive relationships with men. To Williams, the two were interconnected.

“My sister shouldn’t have been going through mental-health problems because she felt like she couldn’t get justice for domestic violence, and now they take her kids,” she said. Earlier, she told *The Stranger* that Lyles had an open case with Child Protective Services.

“Worrying about losing her kids and dealing with the craziness of the baby’s daddy caused her to have a mental breakdown,” she said. Less than a week before Lyles’s death, she was released from the King County Jail, where she had been held for 11 days on charges of harassment and obstructing a public officer. A spokesperson for the Seattle Police Department said she wielded a pair of scissors—a weapon—before that arrest, which also involved a dispute with her boyfriend.

Kenny Isabell, a cousin and pastor of the Way of Holiness Church of God in Christ, remembered Lyles as a religious woman who “came to my church on a regular basis, trying to get her life together.” Lyles had some issues, he said, but “she was a fine young lady. She was reaching out. She was seeking help and the system failed her.”

More than anything, family remembered, Lyles loved her children. After she became pregnant again, Williams recalls trying to talk her out of having a fifth child.

“She told me straight up that she was going to keep the gift God gave her,” Williams said. “No matter the struggle, she was still going to be there for her kids.” ■

“We can make sure she didn’t die in vain by bringing accountability to this state.”

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WEED



JODY HALL She's here, she's queer, and she's an edibles pioneer.

THE STRANGER

Coffee, Cupcakes, and Cannabis

Pioneering Queer Business Owner Jody Hall

BY LESTER BLACK

Jody Hall does business like a Wild West settler: For two decades, she's been setting up shop not where the customers are but where the customers will be. She worked at Starbucks in the early 1990s, when most Americans couldn't pronounce "latte" and the chain had 30 stores. Then she created Cupcake Royale in 2003, before people could imagine spending \$4 on a small cake.

Cupcake Royale now has six locations and sells cakes to Metropolitan Market and Alaska Airlines. You know what happened to Starbucks.

Now she's in the middle of Washington's weed industry, running her own edibles company called Goodship. She's betting that in a market where pot is getting cheaper every month, consumers will pay extra for her made-from-scratch confections.

"I feel like if we do it right, the formula of where I want to go is not all that different from Starbucks," Hall said. "What Starbucks did to the commodity of coffee—creating an elevated brand and a lifestyle around that. There will be really cheap stuff and really good stuff at the end of the day, and the way you do that is to create a meaningful brand that people care deeply about. That's what we did at Starbucks and Cupcake Royale, and that's what I want to do with Goodship."

The success of premium edibles companies like Goodship may rely on the ability

to attract an entirely new type of cannabis user into the pot market. Hall is aware that her target market—the same people who have the expendable income to pay \$4 for a cupcake and care where that cupcake's flour came from—might not be shopping for pot quite yet.

"I would say that most of the people in Washington State who could consume have yet to go into the stores," Hall said. "They are curious, but it's intimidating in there."

This target market might be an over-worked parent in an Eastside suburb, a recent retiree in Ballard, or even a young person who moved to Seattle from a conservative part of the country and is only now

starting to move beyond the myths propagated about pot by prohibitionists. What they all have in common is a lack of experience and a general uneasiness with cannabis.

Every aspect of Goodship seems designed to assure these cannabis-wary people that it's okay to eat pot. Hall's products feel

more like Martha Stewart offering you an organic pâté de fruit than a Deadhead trying to sell you a bag of gummy bears he just pulled out of his pocket. The edibles are packaged in a cheerful, clean branding scheme that make them look like they could be sold next to a pack of mints at the Nordstrom checkout counter. Goodship's hard candies, called pastilles, contain only 2.5 milligrams of THC each, the smallest dose size I have seen for ▶

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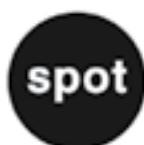
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any edible on the market. When the state-mandated THC serving size for edibles is 10 milligrams (Goodship skirts the law by putting four 2.5 milligram candies in a one-serving bag), these hard candies allow new users to start out with very small doses.

Convincing people to try a new and unusual product was the same thing Hall worked on at Starbucks; she said one of her earliest tasks was creating a phonetic guide to pronouncing the company's drinks. No one knew what a cappuccino or a latte was, let alone how to pronounce them. Starbucks won people over by educating the public about what they were selling but also by creating a socially conscious brand that customers could buy into. Hall is trying to do the same with Goodship.

"We want to build a great brand with a great culture. A company people fall in love with," Hall said.

Goodship advertises their cookies, choc-



THE STRANGER

Goodship cookies, chocolates, and candies are made from scratch with locally sourced, sustainably grown flour and organic chocolate.

oles, and candies as made from scratch with locally sourced, sustainably grown flour and organic chocolate. They are trying to create some cultural capital in Seattle, with a quarterly lecture series (that *The Stranger* is a sponsor of) designed to show how weed can bring people together to share ideas in a new way, and events like a recent Sufjan Stevens listening party at the Pacific Science Center.

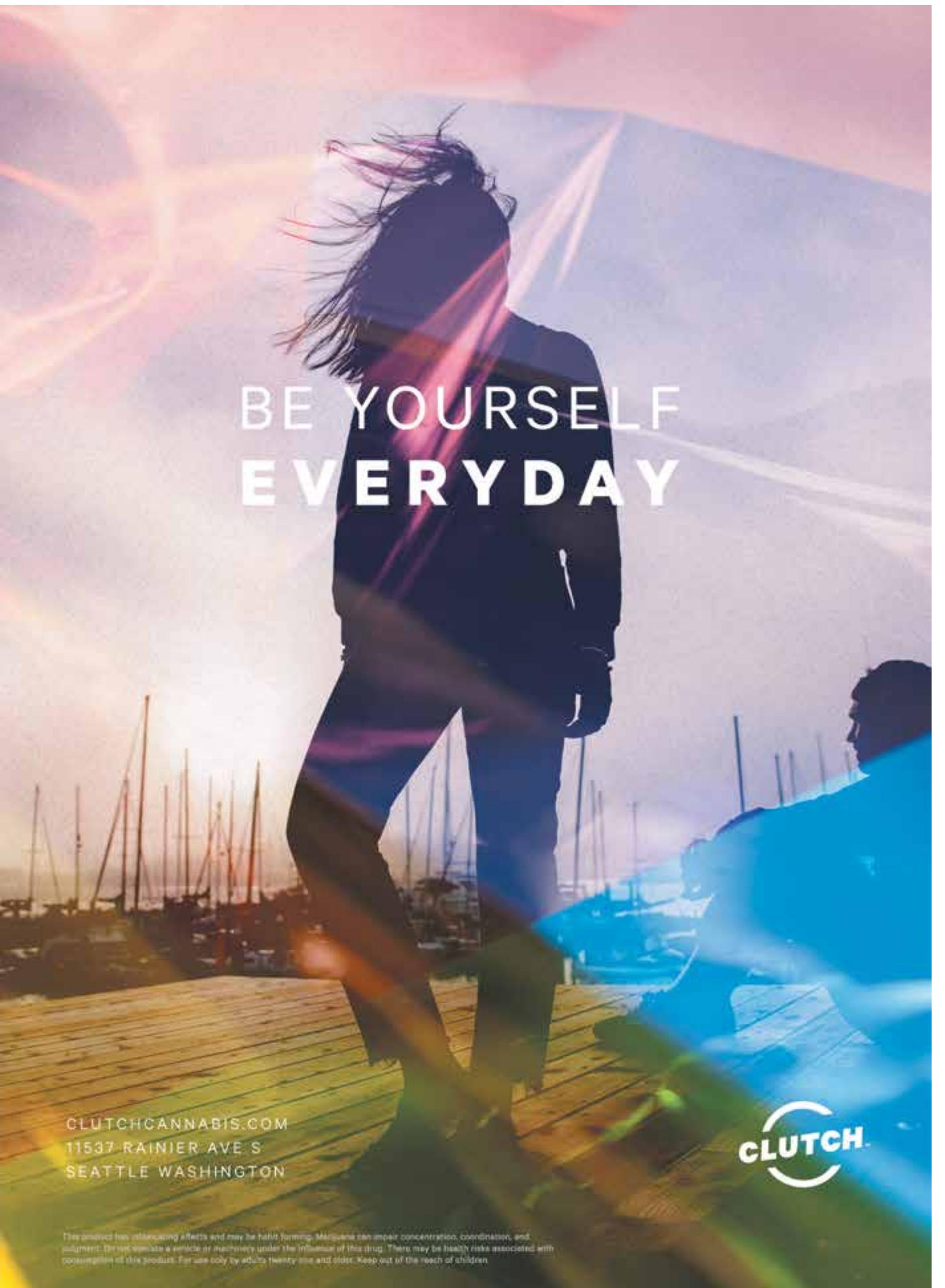
Hall seems to personally embody some of the dichotomy of the corporate and the countercultural. On a recent visit to her headquarters, she was dressed in rolled-up jeans with ripped knees and a blue knit beanie while she peppered discussions with talk of budgetary line items and specifics of the federal tax code. She's a weed dealer who has sold more than \$360,000 in pot edibles but insists on saying "boarding the Goodship," her branded corporate lingo for getting high.

Hall, who is married with two young children, said being gay hasn't been much of a factor in the legal weed industry.

"Pot is hard and fun and exhilarating and draining and grinding... and I think that's almost every human's experience in this industry, gay or not," Hall said.

When you're talking about the pot business, nothing is for sure, but Hall said the company is already laying the groundwork to expand to Nevada and other states with legal pot. ■

Read more weed stories at
THESTRANGER.COM/WEED

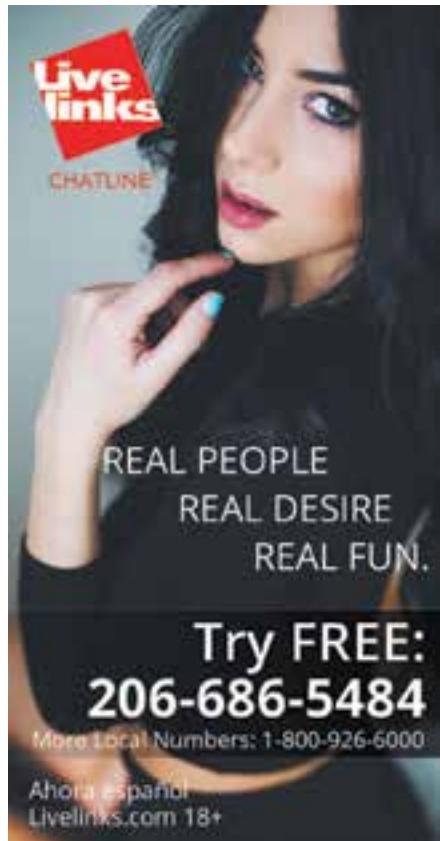


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SAVAGE LOVE

Sneakers BY DAN SAVAGE

I am a 34-year-old straight woman. I'm monogamous and have an avoidant attachment style. I've been seeing a guy I really like. He's just my type, the kind of person I've been looking for my whole life. Thing is, he's in an open relationship with someone he's been with for most of his adult life. He was sneaky—he didn't reveal he was in an open relationship until the second date, but by then I was infatuated and felt like I wasn't in control of my actions. So what I've learned is that poly couples often seek out others to create NRE or "new relationship energy," which may help save their relationship in the long run. I was deeply hurt to learn about NRE. What about the people who are dragged into a situation by some charmer in an attempt to breathe new life into a stale relationship? I feel like no one cares about the people on the side, the ones who might be perceived to be cheating with someone's partner, as some sort of competitor, a hussy. How can I reconcile the fact that I've fallen for someone who sees me as a tool to be discarded once the excitement wears off? I know we all have a choice, but we also know what it's like to be infatuated with someone who seems perfect. I feel like such a loser.

Sobbing Here And Making Errors

"One of life's hardest lessons is this: Two people can be absolutely crazy in love with each other and still not be good partners," said Franklin Veaux, coauthor of *More Than Two: A Practical Guide to Ethical Polyamory* (morethantwo.com). "If you're monogamous and you meet someone you're completely smitten with who isn't, the best thing to do is acknowledge that you're incompatible and go your separate ways. It hurts and it sucks, but there it is."

This perfect, sneaky guy who makes you feel like a loser and a hussy? He told you he was in an open relationship on your second date. You knew he wasn't "your type" or "perfect" for you the second time you laid eyes on him, SHAME, and you needed to go your separate ways at that point. And I'm not buying your excuse ("I was too infatuated!"). What if he had revealed that he was a recreational bed wetter? Or a serial killer? Or Jeffrey Lord? Or all of the above? Surely you would've dumped him then.

Veaux advocates ethical polyamory—it's right there in the title of his book—and he thinks this guy did you wrong by not disclosing his partner's existence right away. "Making a nonmonogamous relationship work requires a commitment to communication, honesty, and transparency," said Veaux. "Concealing the fact that you're in a relationship is a big violation of all three, and no good will come of it."

I have a slightly different take. Straight women in open relationships have an easier time finding men willing to fuck and/or date them; their straight male counterparts have a much more difficult time. Stigma and double standards are at work here—she's sexually adventurous; he's a cheating bastard—and waiting to disclose the fact that you're poly (or kinky or HIV-positive or a cammer) is a reaction to/work-around for that. It's also a violation of poly best practices, like Veaux says, but the stigma is a violation, too. Waiting to disclose your partner, kink, HIV status, etc., can prompt the other person to weigh their assumptions and prejudices about poly/kinky/poz people against the living, breathing person they've come to know. Still, disclosure needs to come early—with a date or two, certainly before anyone gets fucked—so the other person can bail if poly/kinky/poz is a deal breaker.

As for that new relationship energy stuff...

"There are, in truth, polyamorous people who are NRE junkies," said Veaux. "Men and women who chase new relationships in pursuit of that emotional fix. They're not very common, but they do exist, and alas they tend to leave a lot of destruction in their wake."

But your assumptions about how NRE works are wrong, SHAME. Seeing your partner in the throes of NRE doesn't bring the primary couple closer together; it often places a strain on the relationship. Opening up a relationship can certainly save it (if openness is a better fit for both partners), but NRE isn't a log the primary couple tosses on the emotional/erotic fire. It's something a poly person experiences with a new partner, not something a poly person enjoys with an established one.

And there are lots of examples of long-term poly relationships out there—established triads, quads, quints—so your assumption about being discarded once NRE wears off is also off, SHAME. There are no guarantees, however. If this guy were single and looking for a monogamous relationship, you could nevertheless discover you're not right for each other and wind up being discarded or doing the discarding yourself.

I'm going to give the final word to our guest expert...

"Having an avoidant attachment style complicates things, because one of the things that can go along with avoidant attachment is idealizing partners who are inaccessible or unavailable," said Veaux. "That can make it harder to let go. But if you're radically incompatible with the person you love, letting go is likely your only healthy choice. Good luck!"

I'm gay and married. My husband regularly messes around with this one guy who treats me like I'm a cuckold. He will send me a pic of my husband sucking his cock, for example, and a text message meant to degrade me. But I'm not a cuckold and I don't find these messages sexy. My husband wants me to play along because it gets this guy off. Advice?

Can't Understand Cuckold Kink

It depends, CUCK. If you're upset by these messages—if they hurt your feelings, are damaging your sexual connection to your husband, are traumatizing—don't play along. But if you find them silly—if they just make you roll your eyes—then play along. Respond positively/abjectly/insincerely, then delete. Not to please the guy sending the messages (who you don't owe anything), but to please your husband (who'll wind up owing you).

I am a straight male grad student in my mid-20s. My girlfriend wants to have sex with another girl in our class. Neither of us have had a threesome before, but both of us are game. Unfortunately, I am not attracted to this girl. When we started dating, my girlfriend told me that she is sexually attracted to women. We agreed to be monogamous except that she could have sex with other women as part of a threesome with me. She is not hell-bent on having sex with our classmate, but she would like to and says it's up to me. I don't want her to suppress her same-sex tendencies, but I am jealous at the thought of her having sex with someone else while I am not participating. What should I do?

Feeling Out Moments Orgasmic

You should take yes for an answer, FOMO—or take your girlfriend's willingness to say no to this opportunity for an answer. She's into this woman but willing to pass on her because you aren't. There are billions of other women on the planet—some in your immediate vicinity—so you two have lots of other options. Unless you find a reason to object to every woman your girlfriend finds attractive, you aren't guilty of suppressing her same-sex tendencies. ■

On the Lovecast, Michael Hobbes on gay, middle-aged dating: savagelovecast.com.

mail@savagelove.net
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ITMFA.org

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

BY ROB BREZSNY



For the Week of June 21

ARIES (March 21–April 19): There are places in the oceans where the sea floor cracks open and spreads apart from volcanic activity. This allows geothermally heated water to vent out from deep inside the earth. Scientists explored such a place in the otherwise frigid waters around Antarctica. They were elated to find a "riot of life" living there, including previously unknown species of crabs, sea stars, sea anemones, and barnacles. Judging from the astrological omens, Aries, I suspect that you will soon enjoy a metaphorically comparable eruption of warm vitality from the unfathomable depths. Will you welcome and make use of these raw blessings even if they are unfamiliar and odd?

TAURUS (April 20–May 20): I'm reporting from the first annual Psychic Olympics in Los Angeles. For the past five days, I've competed against the world's top mind readers, dice controllers, spirit whisperers, spoon benders, angel wrestlers, and stock-market prognosticators. Thus far, I have earned a silver medal in the category of channeling the spirits of dead celebrities. (Thanks, Frida Kahlo and Gertrude Stein!) I psychically foresee that I will also win a gold medal for most accurate fortune-telling. Here's the prophecy that I predict will cinch my victory: "People born in the sign of Taurus will soon be at the pinnacle of their ability to get telepathically aligned with people who have things they want and need."

GEMINI (May 21–June 20): While reading Virginia Woolf, I found the perfect maxim for you to write on a slip of paper and carry around in your pocket or wallet or underwear: "Let us not take it for granted that life exists more fully in what is commonly thought big than in what is commonly thought small." In the coming weeks, dear Gemini, I hope you keep this counsel simmering constantly in the back of your mind. It will protect you from the dreaminess and superstition of the people around you. It will guarantee that you'll never overlook potent little breakthroughs as you scan the horizon for phantom miracles. And it will help you change what needs to be changed slowly and surely, with minimum disruption.

CANCER (June 21–July 22): Now that you've mostly paid off one of your debts to the past, you can go window-shopping for the future's best offers. You're finally ready to leave behind a power spot you've outgrown and launch your quest to discover fresh power spots. So bid farewell to lost causes and ghostly temptations, Cancerian. Slip away from attachments to traditions that longer move you and the deadweight of your original family's expectations. Soon you'll be empty and light and free—and ready to make a vigorous first impression when you encounter potential allies in the frontier.

LEO (July 23–Aug 22): I suspect you will soon have an up close and personal encounter with some form of lightning. To ensure it's not a literal bolt shooting down out of a thundercloud, please refrain from taking long romantic strolls with yourself during a storm. Also, forgo any temptation you may have to stick your finger in electrical sockets. What I'm envisioning is a type of lightning that will give you a healthy metaphorical jolt. If any of your creative circuits are sluggish, it will jump-start them. If you need to wake up from a dreamy delusion, the lovable lightning will give you just the right salutary shock.

VIRGO (Aug 23–Sept 22): Signing up to read at the open-mic segment of a poetry slam? Buying an outfit that's a departure from the style you've cultivated for years? Getting dance lessons or a past-life reading or instructions on how to hang glide? Hopping on a jet for a spontaneous getaway to an exotic hot spot? I approve of actions like those, Virgo. In fact, I won't mind if you at least temporarily abandon at least 30 percent of your inhibitions.

LIBRA (Sept 23–Oct 22): I don't know what marketing specialists are predicting about color trends for the general population, but my astrological analysis has discerned the most evocative colors for you Libras. *Electric mud* is one. It's a scintillating mocha hue. Visualize silver-blue sparkles emerging from moist dirt tones. Earthy and dynamic! *Cybernatural* is another special color for you. Picture sheaves of ripe wheat blended with the hue you see when you close your eyes after staring into a computer monitor for hours. Organic and shimmering! Your third pigment of power is *pastel adrenaline*: a mix of dried apricot and the shadowy brightness that flows across your nerve synapses when you're taking aggressive practical measures to convert your dreams into realities. Delicious and dazzling!

SCORPIO (Oct 23–Nov 21): Do you ever hide behind a wall of detached cynicism? Do you protect yourself with the armor of jaded coolness? If so, here's my proposal: In accordance with the astrological omens, I invite you to escape those perverse forms of comfort and safety. Be brave enough to risk feeling the vulnerability of hopeful enthusiasm. Be sufficiently curious to handle the fluttery uncertainty that comes from exploring places you're not familiar with and trying adventures you're not totally skilled at.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22–Dec 21): "We must unlearn the constellations to see the stars," writes Jack Gilbert in his poem "Tear It Down." He adds: "We find out the heart only by dismantling what the heart knows." I invite you to meditate on these ideas. By my calculations, it's time to peel away the obvious secrets so you can penetrate to the richer secrets buried beneath. It's time to dare a world-changing risk that is currently obscured by easy risks. It's time to find your real life hidden inside the pretend one, to expedite the evolution of the authentic self that's germinating in the darkness.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22–Jan 19): When I was 4 years old, I loved to use crayons to draw diagrams of the solar system. It seems I was already laying a foundation for my interest in astrology. How about you, Capricorn? I invite you to explore your early formative memories. To aid the process, look at old photos and ask relatives what they remember. My reading of the astrological omens suggests that your past can show you new clues about what you might ultimately become. Potentials that were revealed when you were a wee tyke may be primed to develop more fully.

AQUARIUS (Jan 20–Feb 18): I often ride my bike into the hills. The transition from the residential district to open spaces is a narrow dirt path surrounded by thick woods on one side and a steep descent on the other. Today as I approached this place, there was a new sign on a post. It read "Do not enter: Active beehive forming in the middle of the path." Indeed, I could see a swarm hovering around a tree branch that juts down low over the path. How to proceed? I might get stung if I did what I usually do. Instead, I dismounted from my bike and dragged it through the woods so I could join the path on the other side of the bees. Judging from the astrological omens, Aquarius, I suspect you may encounter a comparable interruption along a route that you regularly take. Find a detour, even if it's inconvenient.

PISCES (Feb 19–March 20): I bet you'll be extra creative in the coming weeks. Cosmic rhythms are nudging you toward fresh thinking and imaginative innovation, whether they're applied to your job, your relationships, your daily rhythm, or your chosen art form. To take maximum advantage of this provocative luck, seek out stimuli that will activate high-quality brainstorms. I understand that the composer André Grétry got inspired when he put his feet in ice water. Author Ben Johnson felt energized in the presence of a purring cat and by the aroma of orange peels. I like to hang out with people who are smarter than me. What works for you? ■

Homework: What were the circumstances in which you were most amazingly, outrageously alive? Testify at freewillastrology.com.

I, ANONYMOUS

To submit an unsigned confession or accusation, send an e-mail to ianonymous@thestranger.com. Please remember to change the names of the innocent and guilty.

GET IT STRAIGHT

Dear straight people who come to queer nights: Look, I know we have great style, we're super fun, and we throw rad parties—but that doesn't mean you're invited. It isn't a straight bar on the nights reserved for queers! We specifically reserve nights so we can go somewhere and feel safe while dancing and drinking. We don't want to worry about whether the guy in the corner with his friends is going to jump us on the way to our car. We don't appreciate being called expletives as we make out or dance. We don't appreciate you reiterating your straightness by groping your girlfriend or boyfriend all night. We get it. So here is the deal: We get one special night a month to cut loose and have some fun, while you get every fucking night of the year. Could you just not come to the bar for one night?

—Anonymous



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 Sat 7/15 - Bondage for Control
 Thu 7/20 - Consent & Negotiation For All
 Sat 7/22 - A Sadist's Touch
 Sat 7/29 - Geek Out on Single Column Ties

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THINGS TO DO ARTS & CULTURE

All the Events The Stranger Suggests This Week

Find the complete calendar of things to do in Seattle at strangerthingstodo.com   Stranger Things To Do



Purr Pride: Katya
Thurs June 22 at Purr Cocktail Lounge

PERFORMANCE

Purr Pride: Katya

DON'T MISS Your Pride Thursday should be spent at Purr with Katya from *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Why? First off, there are rumors swirling that Purr is being priced out of its spot on 11th Avenue. Rumors are like drag queens, in that they're usually made up of lies. Nevertheless, this may be your last Pride at Purr's current location. Secondly, Katya is a star and universally admired across drag scenes. (Yeah, straighties, there is more than one drag scene.) Her vibe is a mix of Archie McPhee, the movie *Contact*, and the inappropriate things your stepmother told you over the holidays. Do those things not excite you? Then don't go see Katya. It won't be a safe space for you. (*Purr Cocktail Lounge, Thurs June 22, 9 pm-2 am, \$7, 21+*) **CHASE BURNS**

We also recommend...

- Arj Barker:** Parlor Live Comedy Club, Bellevue, Thurs June 22, 7:30 pm, \$20-\$30
- Barbecue:** Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute, Wed-Sun, \$20-\$50, through June 25
- Cabaret:** Paramount Theatre, Wed-Sun, \$30+, through June 25
- Dreamgirls:** Village Theatre, Issaquah, Tues-Sun, \$50-\$78, through July 2
- (Im)pulse:** Seattle Repertory Theatre, Thurs-Sun, \$42, through July 2
- Lost Falls:** Nordo's Culinarium, Wed-Sun, 6:30 pm, \$67-\$105, through June 25
- Lydia:** Strawberry Theatre Workshop at 12th Avenue Arts, Thurs-Sat, 7:30 pm \$36, through June 24
- Michael Che:** Neptune Theatre, Fri June 23, 7 and 10:15 pm, \$25/\$30
- The Realistic Joneses:** New Century Theatre Company at 12th Avenue Arts, Thurs-Sun, \$5-\$35, through July 1
- Romy and Michele's High School Reunion:** The 5th Avenue Theatre, Tues-Sun, \$29-\$121, through July 2
- Seattle International Dance Festival:** Various locations, Wed-Sun, \$18-\$125, through June 25
- Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street:** ArtsWest, Thurs-Sun, \$19-\$39.50, through July 1
- Welcome to Braggsville:** Book-It Repertory Theatre, Wed-Sun, \$15-\$50, through July 2

Complete listings at strangerthingstodo.com

QUEER

Unicorn Pride Show-Tunes Sing-Along

DON'T MISS Tonight's the night to let the song in your heart burst forth, whether that song is from *Hamilton* or *South Pacific* or the musical version of *Hamlet* on *Continued ►*

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THINGS TO DO ARTS & CULTURE

that one episode of *Gilligan's Island*. Local chanteuses Isabella Extynn and Tipsy Rose Lee host a night of Broadway bawdiness, playing beloved clips and urging the ever-tipsier audience to belt along to the tunes. Relive your glory days of high-school drama club, from rehearsal to showtime to cast party all in one night. And remember—it's okay if you don't know all the lyrics to "Your Fault," because let's be honest, nobody truly does. (*Unicorn*, Sat June 24, 6-9 pm, free) **MATT BAUME**

We also recommend...

Bette, Babs, and Beyoncé: McCaw Hall, June 23-24, 8 pm, \$25-\$75

History Café: Queer Resistance and Activism in Seattle: Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI), Wed June 21, 6:30 pm, free

Linda's Pride Party: Linda's Tavern, Sat June 24, 7 pm, free

Purr Pride: Purr Cocktail Lounge, June 21-25, free-\$25

Real Talk: LGBTQ Conversations for Change: Frye Art Museum, Thurs June 22, 5-8:30 pm, free

Complete listings at [thestranger.com/pride](#) and in the Queer Things To Do section of this issue

READINGS & TALKS

Arundhati Roy

DON'T MISS It's true that *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is the first novel Arundhati Roy has published since her 1997 Booker Prize-winning blockbuster *The God of Small Things*. But Joan Acocella's incredible *New Yorker* review of the new book reminds us that the author has written nearly 20 books of nonfiction about economic inequality in the "New India" and state violence against poor people. Those decades of study and reportage work their way into her new novel, which begins with a lyrical story about *hijras*, "a long-recognized subculture" of Indian transgender people, before morphing into an epic about the Indian Army's atrocities. If you missed out on the reading Roy gave almost exactly 20 years ago, be sure to make this one. (*Town Hall*, Tues June 27, 7:30 pm, \$5/\$35, on standby) **RICH SMITH**

We also recommend...

Charles Johnson in Conversation with Garth Stein: Third Place Books Ravenna, Tues June 27, 7-8 pm, free

A Conversation with T. Geronimo Johnson: Book-It Repertory Theatre, Sat June 24, 5 pm, \$15

June Write-In: Co-presented by Write Our Democracy: Hugo House First Hill, Sat June 24, 10 am, free

Nathan Hill: The Nix: Elliott Bay Book Company, Fri June 23, 7 pm, free

Says You! presents Two Live Tapings: Town Hall, Sat June 24, 7 pm, Sun June 25, 1:30 pm, \$32.50-\$100

Complete listings at [strangerthingstodo.com](#)

ART

iCuidado! - The Help

DON'T MISS Los Angeles artist Ramiro Gomez alters found images and advertisements by superimposing painterly silhouettes of Latino service workers onto their idealized surfaces, highlighting the often invisible labor that allows these capitalist dreamworlds

to function. These paintings come from first-hand knowledge—before he was a successful artist, he worked as a nanny for wealthy parents. Gomez is one of 13 artists in *iCuidado! - The Help*, a group exhibition about labor, class, and the racism that hierarchies get built on. The exhibition is, according to the gallery, a form of protest against Trump's xenophobic ideas about immigration and the war on those at the bottom of the economic ladder. (*Greg Kucera Gallery*, Tues-Sat, through July 15, free) **EMILY POTHEAST**

We also recommend...

MUSEUMS

Amie Siegel: Interiors: Frye Art Museum, Tues-Sun, free, through Sept 3

Daniel Minter: Carvings: Northwest African American Museum, Wed-Sun, \$7, through Sept 17

Denzil Hurley: Disclosures: Seattle Art Museum, Mon, Wed-Sun, \$25, through Nov 5

Electric Coffin: Future Machine: Bellevue Arts Museum, Wed-Sun, \$12, through Sept 10

Inye Wokoma: An Elegant Utility: Northwest African American Museum, Wed-Sun, \$7, through July 27

Jacob Lawrence: Eight Studies for the Book of Genesis: Henry Art Gallery, Wed-Sun, \$10, through Oct 1

Kraft Duntz featuring Dawn Cerny: Fun. No Fun.: Henry Art Gallery, Wed-Sun, \$10, through Sept 10

Marimekko, With Love: Nordic Heritage Museum, Tues-Sun, \$8, through July 9

Terracotta Warriors of the First Emperor: Pacific Science Center, \$33, through Oct 1

We Are the Ocean: An Indigenous Response to Climate Change: Wing Luke Museum, Tues-Sun, \$17, through Nov 12

Zhi Lin: In Search of the Lost History of Chinese Migrants and the Transcontinental Railroads: Tacoma Art Museum, June 27-Feb 18, \$15

GALLERIES

Adrien Leavitt: Queer Feelings: Vermilion, Tues-Sun, free, through July 8

And Not Or: Hedreen Gallery, Wed-Sat free, through Aug 12

Angelica María Millán Lozano and Sofía Córdoba: Thrown: Bridge Productions, Thurs-Sat, free, through July 1

Christopher Buening: New Work (Guerilla Ceramica): SOIL, Thurs-Sun, free, through June 30

Gaylen Hansen: New and Select Work from the Past: Linda Hodges Gallery, Tues-Sat, free, through July 1

Jason T Miles: Lightning Snake: Fan-tagraphics Bookstore and Gallery, free, through July 5

Josh Faught: Sanctuary: St. Mark's Cathedral, free, through July 31, 2018

Kathy Liao: Lingering Presence: Prographica / KDR, Tues-Sat, free, through July 1

Mwangi Hutter: Falling in Love, Again.: Mariane Ibrahim Gallery, Wed-Sat, free, through July 21

Paul Komada: Monument In Memory: Abstract Alaskan Way: 4Culture, Mon-Fri, free, through June 29

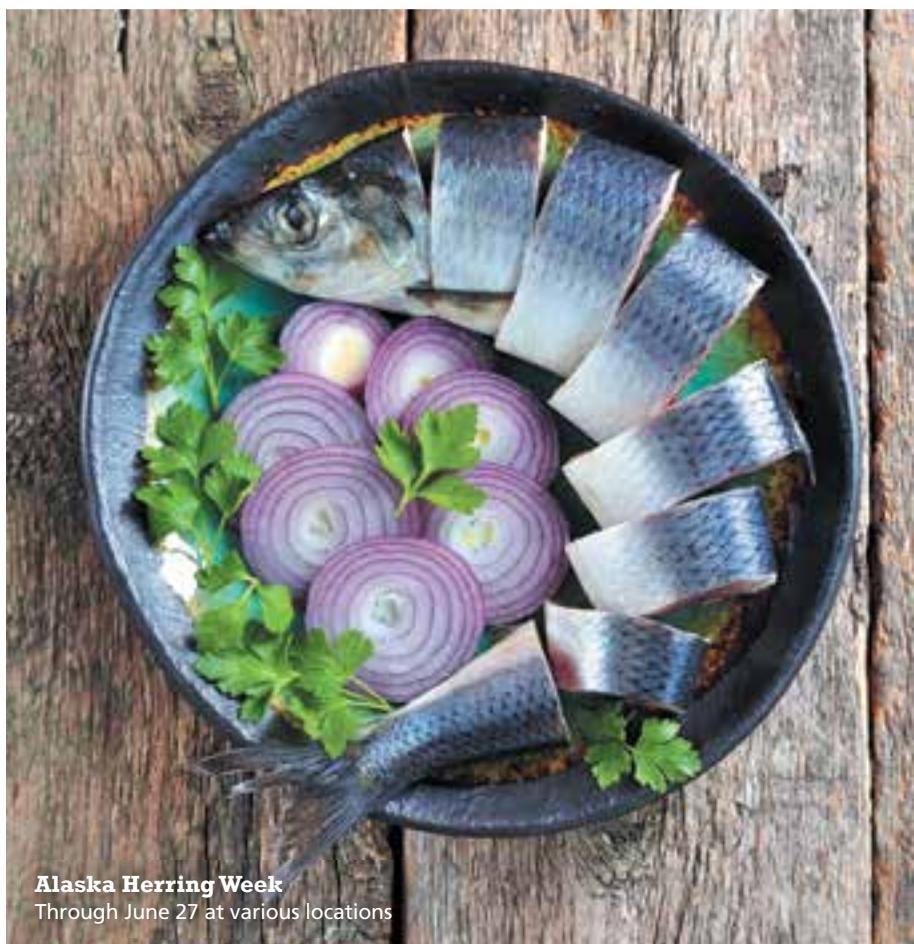
Rene Almanza, Isauro Huizar, and Alexis Mata (Ciler): Vessel: Three Viewpoints From Contemporary Mexico: SOIL, Thurs-Sun, free, through July 1

SAM Gallery: Ryan Molenkamp: Washington State Convention & Trade Center, free, through Aug 15

Singularity Now: ArtXchange, Tues-Sat, free, through June 24

Complete listings at [strangerthingstodo.com](#).

THINGS TO DO ARTS & CULTURE



Alaska Herring Week
Through June 27 at various locations

GETTY IMAGES

FOOD & DRINK

Alaska Herring Week

DON'T MISS Two years ago, in an article about the disappearance of the Pacific herring from Seattle's food milieu, I asked, "Why, in Seattle—one of the world's major seafood hubs—can we not get a simple fillet of herring?" Thanks to the hard work of a few local herring lovers—Lexi at the Old Ballard Liquor Co., Bruce Schactler of the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, and Warner Lew, one of the few fisherman bringing Bristol Bay herring down to Seattle—this is no longer such an issue. Before, getting any herring that wasn't pickled and flown in from the North Atlantic was pretty much impossible, as our own Puget Sound herring fishery was completely depleted, and all of Bristol Bay's herring was sent off to Japan, where the roe is a traditional New Year's Eve delicacy. Not exactly the most sustainable food system, right? And that's why Herring Week is so cool: By getting our best and brightest local dining establishments and grocers to celebrate the oft overlooked fish, we get consumers interested in the fish again. This then convinces suppliers to send it our way, which involves a whole helluva lot less shipping and pollution. It's a big, magical feedback loop of win. And it's a fabulous excuse to take yourself out to restaurants like the Walrus and the Carpenter, Lark, Terra Plata, Hitchcock, and so many more. (*Various locations, through June 25*) **TOBIAS COUGHLIN-BOGUE**

We also recommend...

2nd Annual Dine with Pride: Various locations, \$15/\$25/\$35, through June 25
Bastille Café & Bar Rooftop Dinner Series: Bastille Cafe Bar, Mon-Tues, 5:45 pm, \$165, through Sept 19
Chef Dinner Series Vol. XXXII: Rich Coffey: E. Smith Mercantile, Sun June 25, 6 pm, \$80

Easy Polynésie Patio Party: Bastille Cafe Bar, Thurs June 22, 5 pm

Lilla Fredag: Fried Herring Dinner!: Swedish Cultural Center, Wed June 21, 5:30 pm, \$16

Records, Pancakes, & Bach: On the Boards, Sun June 25, noon, \$5-\$10 suggested donation

Rosé All Day Saturdays: Sorrento Hotel, Sat, free admission, through Aug 26

ToMayTo vs. ToMahTo - Chef Battle #4: mkt., Mon June 26, 5 pm

Complete listings at strangerthingstodo.com

FILM

After the Storm

DON'T MISS Hirokazu Kore-eda is one of the greatest directors in the world. His 1998 *After Life* is a masterpiece of 1990s cinema. That's all you need to know about his new work, *After the Storm*, which is not too slow, too beautiful, too funny, too charming, too sad, and is not about much at all—there is a broken man, a death in the family, lots of old people in a quiet neighborhood, and very little money to go around. Drink a little sake before watching this film, which, like room-temperature sake, will make you all warm inside. (*SIFF Cinema Uptown, opens Fri June 23*) **CHARLES MUDEDE**

We also recommend...

All Eyez on Me: Various locations

Best of SIFF Shorts 2017: SIFF Cinema Uptown, Thurs June 22, 4:30 pm, \$14

The Hero: SIFF Cinema Uptown, opens Fri June 23

Jurassic Park: Scarecrow Video, Fri June 23, 7 pm, free

Manifesto: SIFF Film Center, opens Fri June 23

Stefan Sweig: Farewell to Europe: Grand Illusion, June 21-22, 7:30 pm, \$9

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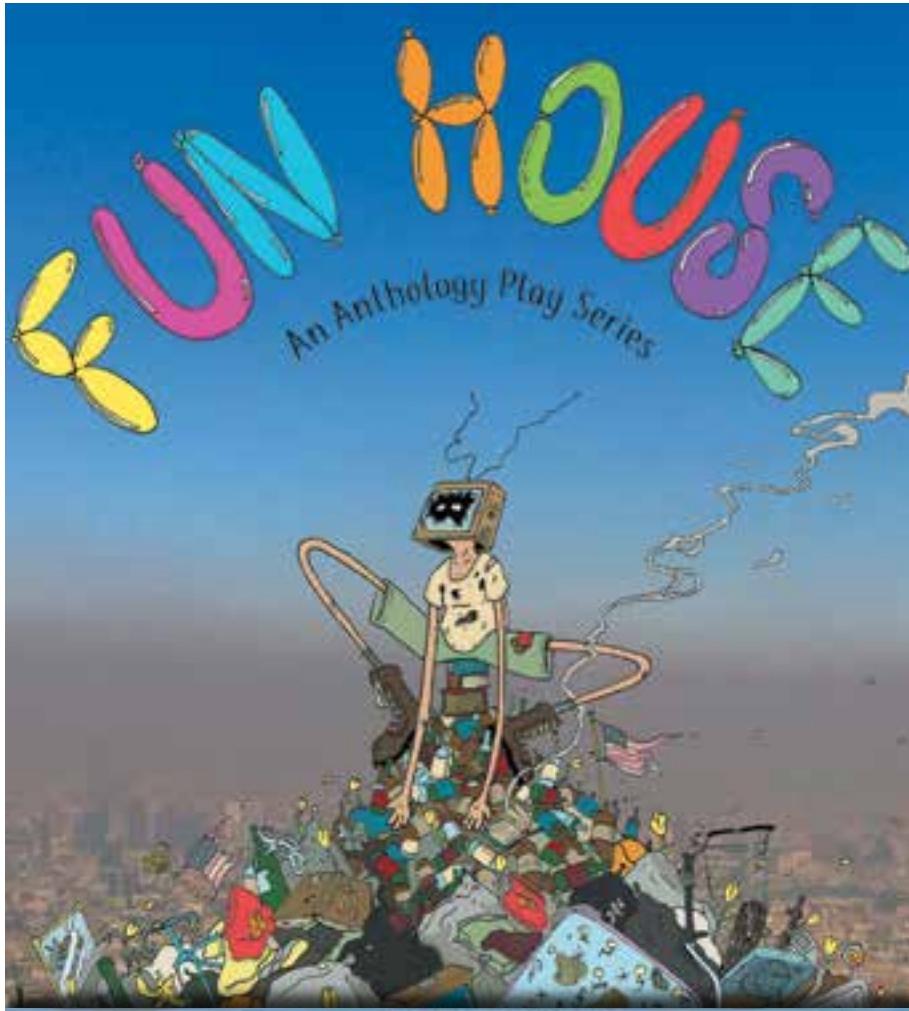
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SATURDAY

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SUNDAY

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THINGS TO DO MUSIC

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RON HARRELL

WEDNESDAY 6/21

Forms: The Gaslamp Killer, Mad Zach
(Q Nightclub) In September 2013, I found myself at Low End Theory, the world-famous weekly beathead night in Los Angeles. Early in the evening, I said peace to Low End cofounder, Brainfeeder producer/DJ Gaslamp Killer. I couldn't help asking about his harrowing experience a few months prior—a scooter accident that nearly killed him. He conveyed an intense calm as he described a DMT-vivid scene of violent body horror and hospital creeps—it actually gave me that pit-of-the-stomach sensation of strong psychedelics kicking in, a pretty apt dimension to engage with GLK's arresting instrumental work. His two LPs—2013's *Breakthrough* and

last year's *Instrumentalepathy*, are concise lysergical strikes that, just like his mixes, pull from obscure avant-garde sources old and new, as much as they do from his own Turkish-Syrian-Latvian-Lithuanian-Mexican-Jewish pedigree. **LARRY MIZELL JR.**

Guitar Wolf, Isaac Rother & the Phantoms, Mommy Long Legs

(Sunset) From their noisy late-1980s beginnings, Japanese garage-rock upstarts Guitar Wolf have trailblazed through tunnels of feedback amid a 1950s-blessed, rockabilly-meets-sci-fi-B-movie aesthetic. With music meant to be listened to past maximum volume, they invented the term "jet rock 'n' roll" to describe their fusion of Ramones' 1977-style punk and feedback-heavy garage

rock filtered through an in-the-red lens. After 30 years of touring, Guitar Wolf's live energy still strikes fear into the hearts of squares, outlasting their Japanese trash invasion contemporaries like Teengenerate even after the 2005 death of GW bassist Billy (Hideaki Sekiguchi). Lovers of wildly-spiced-up, out-of-control tempos and incomprehensible noise amid classic punk motifs should find plenty to revel in Guitar Wolf's semi-controlled chaos. **BRITTНИE FULLER**

Dave Depper

(Barboza) Music to my ears: Rather than more Northwest-infused indie rock, a member of Death Cab for Cutie has struck out on his own to make a sort of modern disco (a genre that will never actually die, only morph into a

form further and further away from its original genius, now known as festival EDM). The band member in question, Dave Depper, has served as the group's touring guitarist for the last three years, additionally developing his own style as a session musician with Menomena, Laura Gibson, Fruit Bats, Ray LaMontagne, and many more. This year, however, he's turned to cranking out the hard SoundCloud electro-pop, with glass brick synth and a pity-party-ready zazz perfect for a gray Miami morning. The singles he's released in anticipation of his upcoming album, *Emotional Freedom Technique*, are propulsive, thoughtful, and angling down the path of mid-2000s Jens Lekman meets Oppenheimer Analysis.

KIM SELLING

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6/23 FRIDAY		The Crocodile and False Prophet Present: Troller @ Lo-Fi Raica, DJ Kate (False Prophet) 21 and over				
6/24 SATURDAY		School of Rock Issaquah Performs: U2 All ages				
6/24 SATURDAY		107.7 The End Presents: J GRGRY The Fabulous Downey Brothers, NVRS LVRS 21 and over				
6/25 SUNDAY		The Crocodile Presents: Jacob Whitesides @ Chop Suey Castro, Taylor Grey All ages				
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<p>6/28 !!! (CHK CHK CHK) 6/29 FUTURECASTLE @ THE SUNSET 6/30 IRON DRAGON 7/1 LUNICE 7/3 THIS WILD LIFE 7/7 RJ 7/11 BEACH FOSSILS 7/14 LITTLE HURRICANE 7/15 ALGIERS 7/16 JAYMES YOUNG 7/17 MAGGIE KOERNER @ THE SUNSET 7/19 R5 7/20 MAD ALCHEMY LIQUID LIGHT SHOW @ THE SUNSET 7/22 JEFF ROSENSTOCK 7/23 PONY TIME 7/24 SOB X RBE @ CHOP SUEY 7/27 KAP G</p> <p>2200 2ND AVE ★ CORNER OF 2ND & BLANCHARD TICKETS @ THECROCODILE.COM & THE CROCODILE BOX OFFICE ★ MORE INFO AT WWW.THECROCODILE.COM ★</p>						

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THINGS TO DO MUSIC

THURSDAY 6/22

Jurassic 5

(Showbox) The J5 (not the one from Gary, Indiana) are probably the most widely known regulars from LA's influential Good Life Cafe scene. (You should fire up your Hulu app and watch *This Is the Life*, the Good Life documentary by *Selma* director Ava DuVernay.) Their jovial, old-school approach and profanity-light songs (possibly owing to the Good Life's no-cussin' policy) made them a favorite rap group among the ol' "people who don't listen to rap" subset, which is hardly their fault. Though they enjoyed some modest success, the J5 never quite topped the rib-sticking perfection of their debut single "Jayou," a proof-of-concept track for the old-school-revival style for which they are known—and on which they aptly described themselves as "on some underground, '75, Wild Style shit." If they—as 1990s rap dudes flexing '70s and '80s styles—go a step beyond the usual definition of the "dinosaur-hopper," at least they wear it with pride. **LARRY MIZELL JR.**

Wally Shoup Electric Quartet, Dave Abramson, Phil Wandscher

(Vermillion) For free jazz to survive, someone has to hold the line. Other music and even other jazz forms rely on the marketplace and/or patronage. Free jazz, a prickly beast that won't bow down to expectations and often won't meet the listener even halfway, needs people to push. Alto saxophonist Wally Shoup pushes. He pushes his collaborators into listening to one another and enriching one another and occasionally fighting one

another, almost all within free improvisation's stipulations. He set up with drummer Paul Kikuchi in the Cascade Tunnel. He's toured Europe solo, braving crowds alone with his sax. I don't know what his "electric quartet" will bring, but mystery adds to the fun. Diminished Men's Dave Abramson opens on solo drums; Jesse Sykes's guitarist, Phil Wandscher, follows on southpaw solo six-string. **ANDREW HAMLIN**

Morning Glory Revival, Shit Ghost, Sonic Caravan, Dr. Quinn & the Medicine Woman, Astrol Waters

(Lo-Fi) Freaks and weirdos, if you're a fan of DOM/STP-induced weirdness, I'mbettin' this lineup will qualify as this year's most rapturous event. So take your pills and get bent by Shit Ghost's twisted, late-1980s-ish "underwater" goth/experimental nightmar-escapes, Astrol Waters' free-flow poetry over unformed yet tuneful and cerebral passages, and Dr. Quinn and the Medicine Woman distorting your reality by stabbing electronic bleeps pointedly through sheets of static noise. And if all the heavy experimental gets too mental, you can float back down during the more conventional sets from Morning Glory Revival, a melodic indie-rock group, and Sonic Caravan's still technicolor-affected but melodic late-'80s indie rock. **MIKE NIPPER**

FRIDAY 6/23

Guardian Alien, Stereo Embers, Kim Virant

(Sunset) Any musician who emulates late-1990s/early-'00s Boredoms automatically earns my respect and undivided attention.

For example, Brooklyn's Guardian Alien, who feature maniacal drummer Greg Fox (ex-Liturgy, ex-Dan Deacon) and vocals/electronics manipulator Alexandra Drewchin. They came out of the gate with 2012's maximalist psychedelic odyssey *See the World Given to a One Love Entity*, which captures the same centrifugal frenzy as Boredoms' *Vision Creation Newsun*. That is not easy to do, people. *Spiritual Emergency* followed in 2014, taking a more insular yet no less brain-boggling assault on avant-rock decorum. It's usually the case with these Boredoms-inspired groups that their live performances exceed what they achieve on record. Which means you should rearrange your life in order to catch Guardian Alien's outward-bound excursions into sublime sonic madness. **DAVE SEGAL**

Rapture: Mike Servito, Succubass, DJ Sling Dion

(Kremwerk) Mike Servito is known as a "DJ's DJ," but it's taken years of toil as an in-house DJ for the Ghostly International label and as a resident at New York's legendary Bunker club to ascend to the international DJ elite, getting booked at prestigious venues like Berlin's Panorama Bar and performing at Amsterdam's Dekmantel Festival. In that regard, like his good friend the Black Madonna, who has also recently become a hot commodity, Servito is no overnight success. A student of Detroit techno/house legend Mike Huckaby, he made a name for himself playing famed parties like San Francisco's Honey Soundsystem and Chicago's Hugo Ball. All of which means, if you love Servito's brand of highbrow, high-energy techno, then this is the must-attend event of the month. **NICK ZURKO**

Easy Star All-Stars, Georgetown Orbita, Valley Green

(Nectar) There's a big difference between bands that play set lists of cover songs at your local watering hole and bands that pay reverent tribute to artists by reinterpreting their material into something that sounds fresh but still resembles the source. Easy Star All-Stars are among the latter. The NYC-Jamaica band—a rotating ensemble led by producer/musician Michael Goldwasser—has worked up dub-reggae versions of select artists since 2003, adding occasional electronic flourishes and tempos to the mix. So far, they've delivered (in order of release) *Dub Side of the Moon* (Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*), *Radiodread* (Radiohead's *OK Computer*), *Easy Star's Lonely Hearts Dub Band* (The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's*), and *Easy Star's Thrillah* (Michael Jackson, *Thriller*). The first two are, by far, the best. In case you were worried about any creative inadequacy, Easy Star have also released a few albums of originals, too. **LEILANI POLK**

The Woggles, the Loons, Sinister Six, the Primate Five

(Funhouse) Garage-rock revivalism seemingly will never go out of style. Of the many retro musical fetishes, it remains one of the most resilient. Because the original template is so cool, it can withstand countless iterations, as long as the musicians in question have studied their history diligently—or cleverly distorted the genre's core elements. Atlanta's the Woggles have been garage-rocking since 1990, and they've done their homework.

Continued ▶

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THINGS TO DO MUSIC

They've nailed the sneering vocals and lyrics about "little girls," forged the memorable, sinewy guitar and bass riffs, and mastered the optimal tempos for fucking shit up. If you've ever owned any of the *Nuggets* comps, you've heard variations of Wiggles songs, but no matter. The Wiggles are alive and thriving now, and the Count Five and Mouse & the Traps aren't, so take what you can get, garage rocker. **DAVE SEGAL**

Troller, Raica, DJ Kate

(Lo-Fi) Austin, Texas, trio Troller sound like they own no clothing that isn't black. You may also jump to that conclusion after hearing their self-titled 2012 album, which broods in an electro-goth miasma, as Amber Goers's prettily godforsaken vocals drone over methodical drum-machine beats and synths set to glum. Troller's 2016 album, *Graphic*, skews a bit darker, making Zola Jesus's early releases sound like Ariana Grande. It's a bracing trudge through an existential morass, kind of like Cocteau Twins' *Head Over Heels* played at 8 rpm. Peak-era 4AD-tronica, anyone? **DAVE SEGAL**

SATURDAY 6/24

Roger Waters

(Tacoma Dome, all ages) Roger Waters is, of course, a founding member of Pink Floyd, one of the greatest psychedelic rock bands of all time, genre pioneers that formed in the 1960s and came up hard in the 1970s with albums like *The Wall*, *Animals*, and *The Dark Side of the Moon*. Both Waters and former bandmate and sporadic

foe David Gilmour have issued original solo material (actually, Gilmour released a few albums and toured under the Pink Floyd flag until 1994, which is partially why he and Waters were at odds), but both have continued to hit the road on the Floyd gravy train, because everyone still wants to hear those old songs in a live setting. On this tour, Waters—who's 73 but still rocks like a fuckin' champ—claims he'll be playing 75 percent old material, 25 percent new, "but it will all be connected by a general theme." Glowing reviews back up his claim; he culls from all three of the aforementioned LPs as well as *Meddle* and *Wish You Were Here*, throws in some original jams, and sets it all against dazzling visuals and a laser light show. **LEILANI POLK**

Pain in the Grass: Korn, Stone Sour, Babymetal, the Pretty Reckless, Yelawolf, Radkey, Islander

(White River Amphitheatre, all ages) Nü metal—it's back, in case the Nookie DJ night at Chop Suey wasn't a loud enough signal. The maligned early-'00s fusion of hiphop and groove metal appeals to the angsty teens in us, and does so with all the subtlety of a chain saw. For whatever reason, glorified turn-of-the-century throwback tour Pain in the Grass just sounds fun this year. Maybe it's because headliners Korn just released their best album in a decade—not that they'd set the bar very high. Maybe it's because in the middle of the bill sits Deep South Eminem disciple Yelawolf. Maybe it's because Corey Taylor of Stone Sour and Slipknot is, plainly speaking, a kickass rock

singer and there just aren't that many left playing amphitheaters. Our angsty teenage selves were wrong about many things, but maybe not about music. **JOSEPH SCHAFER**

SUNDAY 6/25

Rebelution, Nahko and Medicine for the People, Collie Buddz, Hirie, DJ Mackle

(Marymoor Park, all ages, June 24–25) Okay, we got reggae, we got summer-sun vibes, and we got legal pot—which means we got pot clouds thicker than chili. Bring the sunscreen and the shades, keep yourself hydrated, go easy on the booze, and you should have yourself a *irie* kickoff to summer. Rebelution call it the Good Vibes Summer tour, which means revolution will most likely not break out. They hail from University of California, Santa Barbara, so they pour the shore, the sand, and the surf into the premium move-the-crowd grooves. DJ Mackle is not Macklemore, so don't be fooled! He does like to pose with his shirt off, like Kid Rock, but he suggests, from his website, a gentler soul (fingers crossed). **ANDREW HAMLIN**

MONDAY 6/26

Elvis Presley performed his last concert on this date in 1977.

TUESDAY 6/27

Tycho, Todd Terje & the Olsens, Jaga Jazzist

(Marymoor Park, all ages) On paper, Tycho

and Todd Terje are similar enough: They both make dance music, and they both perform it with full bands. After that, the similarities are scarce. Terje got his start making disco edits for DJs, and his original material is sunny and vibrant. His best work, like 2014's *It's Album Time*, radiates enthusiasm for the effect a good dance track can have on a crowd. Tycho splits the difference between post-rock odysseys heavy on the-Edge-circa-1987 guitar work and somnambulant house cuts that come up after Odesza or Flume when you stream Pandora over the dorm's wi-fi. As far as summer concerts go, this pairing is more incongruous than most. **ANDREW GOSPE**

Wild Powwers, Meatbodies, Steal Shit Do Drugs

(Tractor) Los Angeles trio Meatbodies are part of the Ty Segall/Mikal Cronin/Oh Sees axis of bands, which gives you a good baseline for what to expect: homespun rock 'n' roll that's tuneful, deferent to tradition in a constructive way, and prone to ripping off guitar solos that are both shambolic and showy. Compared to Segall and Oh Sees' garage-punk rave-ups, though, Meatbodies operate at a deliberate pace—the band has described its sound as "metal on molly." To that end, the group is touring behind *Alice*, a loosely conceptual album full of sludgy rockers with psychedelic flourishes. Like those associated acts, Meatbodies play live with vigor and practiced abandon. **ANDREW GOSPE**

HIGHLINE

Wednesday, June 21
IMPULSE CONTROL
Post Rapture Party
Trash Dogs, Tiger Blonde
9 PM \$10 - \$12

Thursday, June 22
PROLIX DESTRUCT
Bad Future
9 PM \$10 - \$12

Friday, June 23
Mechanismus presents:
HEXHEART / VOICECOIL / BLAKK GLASS
9 PM \$9 - \$10

Saturday, June 24
WHO'S LAUGHING NOW?
6:30 PM \$10 - \$13

—

T-ROX
Shower Scum
Medusa's Stare
L80
MC Jackie Hell
9 PM \$10

Wednesday, June 28
KYLMYYS
Surrealized
Bad Beaches
God and Vanilla
8 PM \$10 - \$12

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LADIES NIGHT THURSDAYS
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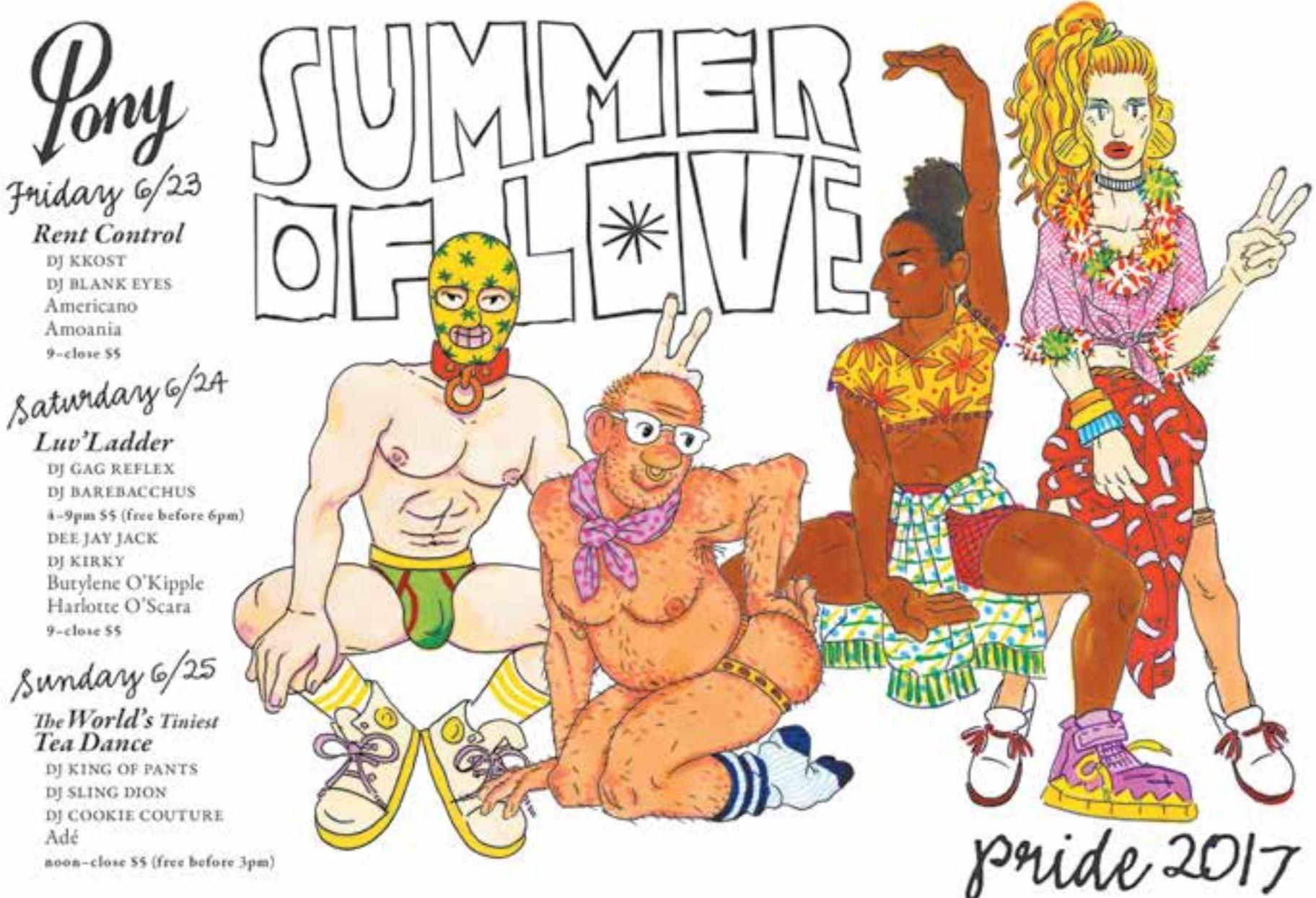
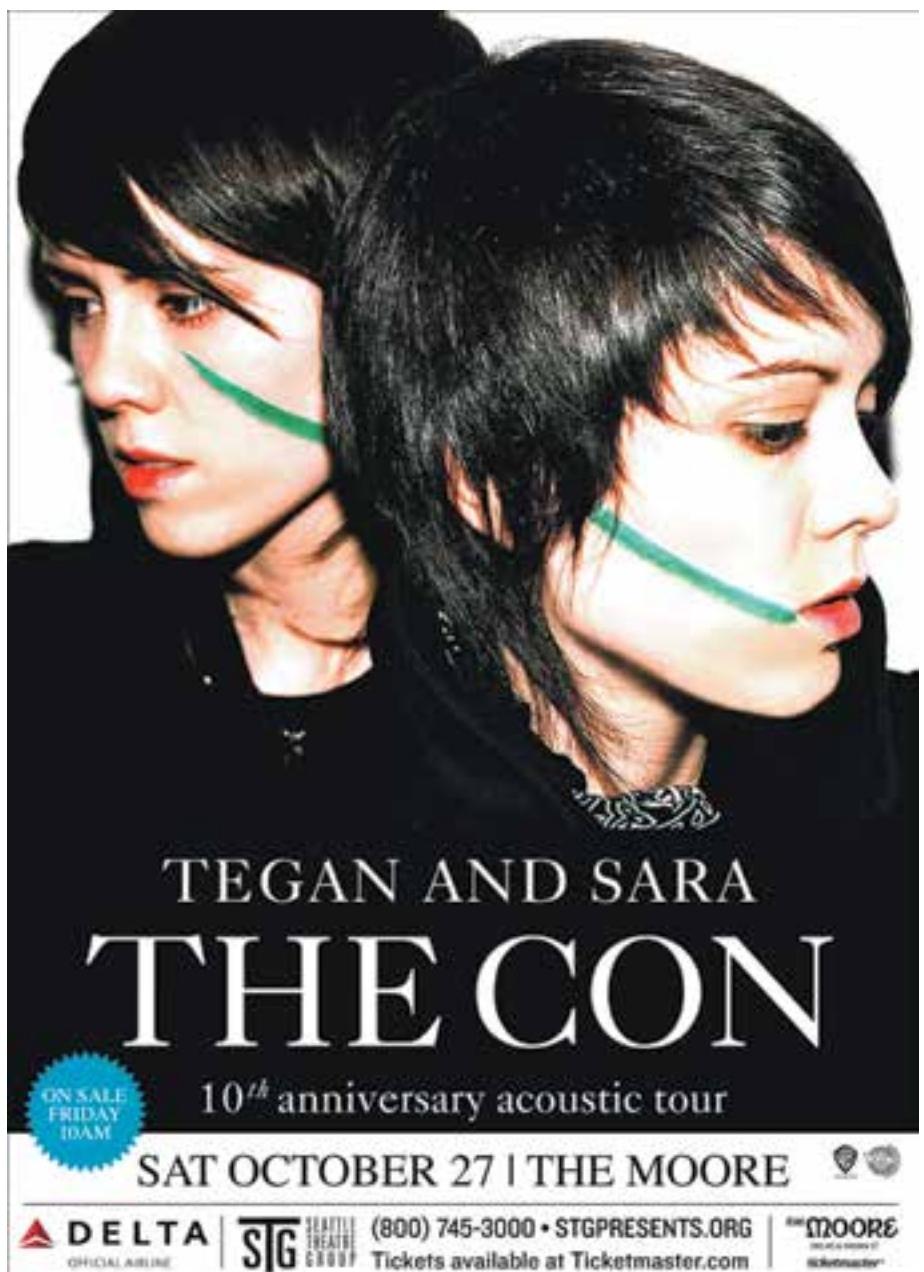
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THINGS TO DO MUSIC

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★ = Recommended A = All Ages

WED 6/21

THURS 6/22

LIVE MUSIC

CAPITOL CIDER Capitol Cider Unplugged, 8 pm, free

★ EASY STREET RECORDS Charms, 7-8 pm, free

HIGH DIVE Yesler, Hat Hair, Look At Me's, 7:30 pm, \$6/\$8

HIGHLINE Impulse Control, Post Rapture Party, Trash Dogs, Tiger Blonde, 9 pm, \$10/\$12

HIGHWAY 99 Big Road Blues, 8 pm, \$7; The Fabulous Roof Shakers, 8 pm, \$7

NECTAR An Evening with John Nemeth, 8 pm, \$10/\$15

THE ROYAL ROOM Funk Church, 10 pm, free; Origami Ghosts, Smashie Smashie, 7:30 pm, free

SEAMONSTER Unsinkables, 9:30 pm, \$5

★ O STUDIO SEVEN Corey Feldman & His Angels, Muldoon, Tiger Rider, 8 pm, \$18/\$25

SUBSTATION Greenriver Thrillers, Droids Attack, Nijlpaard, 8 pm, \$8

TRACTOR TAVERN La Fonda, ELIA, The Landmarks, Baywatch, 8 pm, \$8

★ O WHITE RIVER AMPHITHEATRE STYX, REO Speedwagon, Don Felder, 7 pm, \$27.50-\$99.50

JAZZ

ANCHOR PUB NW Jazz Collective, 7-9 pm

JAZZ ALLEY Curtis Stigers with Seattle Women's Jazz Orchestra, 7:30 pm, \$34.50

● MOLLUSK Jeff Ferguson's Triangular Jaztet, 7-10 pm, free

PARAGON Jazz Jam, 8:30-11 pm, free

TIM'S TAVERN Jazz Night with Stuart McDonald, 8 pm, free

● TULA'S Eric Verlinde Trio, 7:30 pm, \$12

VITO'S RESTAURANT & LOUNGE Brad Gibson Presents, 9 pm

DJ

BASTILLE CAFE BAR Le Verlan with DJ Paces Lift, 8-11 pm, free

CONTOUR Depth, 9 pm, free

★ THE EAGLE MENERGY: A Night of Disco & Debauchery, 9 pm-2 am, free

FOUNDATION SUBstance Wednesdays, 10 pm, \$0-10

LO-FI Loving Touch, 9 pm-2 am, free

NEIGHBOURS Level Up 184: DJ ALO, 9 pm, Free Before 10pm/\$10 After 10pm

CLASSICAL

● TOWN HALL Every New Beginning, 7:30 pm, \$10-\$20

OPEN MIC

BLUE MOON TAVERN Open Mic, 8 pm, free

DARRELL'S TAVERN Open Mic, 8:30 pm, free

● FIX COFFEEHOUSE Open Mic, 7 pm, free

● GRUM D'S Open Mic, 6:30-9 pm

HOPVINE PUB Open Mic, 8 pm, free

SKYLARK CAFE & CLUB Open Mic, 7:30 pm, free

CLASSICAL

★ BENAROYA HALL Mahler Symphony No. 5, 7:30 pm, \$37-\$122

● FREMONT ABBEY Rachel Bairman, Ben Hunter & Joe Seamons, Mike Giacolino, 8 pm, \$10/\$15

OPEN MIC

ANCHOR PUB Anchor Pub Open Mic, 9 pm-midnight, free

● DOWPOUR BREWING Open Mic Night, 5 pm, free

GREEN BEAN

COFFEEHOUSE Open Mic, 7-9 pm

● STONE WAY CAFE WIDE Open Mic, 7-11 pm, free

FRI 6/23

LIVE MUSIC

BARBOZA Reeve Carney, 7 pm, \$15/\$18

BLUE MOON TAVERN Crack Sabbath, 9 pm, \$10

CHATEAU STE. MICHELLE

★ Santana, 7 pm, \$67-\$146

CONOR BYRNE Quinn The Band, Human Ladder, Red Heart Alarm, 9 pm, \$8

EL CORAZON Headcat with Guests, 8 pm, \$17/\$20

GILBERT CELLARS WINERY

AT HACKETT RANCH 2017 Music In The Vines, 7 pm, \$25/\$30

HIGH DIVE Reklez with Guests, 8 pm, \$10/\$12

HIGHLINE Prolix Destruct with Bad Future, 9 pm, \$10/\$12

HIGHWAY 99 Patti Allen and Monster Road, 8 pm, \$8

NECTAR Jungle Fire, Snug Harbor, DJ Chilly, 8 pm, \$10

NEUMOS The Mattson 2, 8 pm, \$15/\$17

PARAGON Live Music, 9 pm-2 am

SEAMONSTER Aqua Soul, 9:30 pm, free for ladies/\$5

SORRENTO HOTEL Summer at Sorrento: Live Acoustic Guitar, 5:30-7:30 pm

SUBSTATION SoulSuckerz, Simple Gravity, Wonky, 8 pm, \$8

THE KRAKEN BAR &

LOUNGE Burn Burn Burn, The Four Lights, Coyote Bred, Three Fingers, 9 pm-2 am, \$7

LUCKY LIQUOR Bürien, Marc & the HorseJerks, Power Skeleton, Dystopian Anthems, 9:30 pm, \$7

● NIGHTCLUB CODA: 012 (Live), 10 pm-2 am, \$10

RENDEZVOUS The Bare Minimum, 9:30 pm, \$8

SEAMONSTER Funky 2 Death: Guests, 10 pm, \$10

SLIM'S LAST CHANCE Low Hums, Nurse Ratchett, The Fuzz, 9 pm, \$6

WOODLAND THEATER Iji, Peg, Tyler Martin: Featuring Michèle and Jade, 8-11 pm

SORRENTO HOTEL Summer at Sorrento: Live Acoustic Guitar, 5:30-9:45 pm

TIM'S TAVERN Foresteater, Witherward, Drifter Luke, 8 pm, \$5

TRACTOR TAVERN Chuck Ragan and Guests, 9 pm, \$20

★ VARIOUS LOCATIONS 23rd Annual Olympia Experimental Music Festival, \$3-\$23

VICTORY LOUNGE You May Die in the Desert, Barrows, Chrome Lakes, Slumberbox, 8:30-11 pm, \$5/\$8

● W SEATTLE A Breakthrough In Field Studies, Eastern Souvenirs, Heather Thomas, 6:30-9:30 pm, free

THE ROYAL ROOM LaVon Hardison Quartet, 8 pm, free; **● When Miles Met Monteverdi**: 17th Century Jazz, 6 pm, free

TULA'S Delvon Lamarr Organ Trio, 7:30 pm, \$12

DJ

BALLROOM Throwback Thursdays: DJ Tamm of KISS FM, 9 pm, free

CONTOUR Jaded: DJs Jades & Morgueanne, 9 pm, free

GRIM'S Special Blends, 8 pm-2 am, free

★ HAVANA Sophisticated Mama: DJ Nitty Gritty, 9 pm, free

CHAPEL PERFORMANCE

SPACE Ronan Delisle and Ryan Ferreira, 8 pm, \$5-\$15 donation

● JAZZ ALLEY Poncho Sanchez Latin Jazz Band, 9:30 pm, \$2.50

R PLACE Thirsty Thursdays: DJ Flow, 9 pm, free

TRINITY Beer Pong Thursdays: DJ Yup and Catch24, 9 pm-midnight, free

THE ROYAL ROOM Arête Quartet, 9 pm, free

CLASSICAL

★ BENAROYA HALL Mahler Symphony No. 5, 7:30 pm, \$37-\$122

● FREMONT ABBEY Rachel Bairman, Ben Hunter & Joe Seamons, Mike Giacolino, 8 pm, \$10/\$15

OPEN MIC

ANCHOR PUB Anchor Pub Open Mic, 9 pm-midnight, free

● DOWPOUR BREWING Open Mic Night, 5 pm, free

● GREEN BEAN

COFFEEHOUSE Open Mic, 7-9 pm

● STONE WAY CAFE WIDE Open Mic, 7-11 pm, free

SAT 6/24

LIVE MUSIC

BARBOZA Zander Schloss, 7:30 pm, \$10/\$12

BLUE MOON TAVERN Melodramus, Lark vs. Owl, Kali Mah, Under The Bodhi Tree, Brent Driscoll, 8:15 pm, \$7

TRACTOR TAVERN Chuck Ragan and Guests, 9 pm, \$20

★ VARIOUS LOCATIONS 23rd Annual Olympia Experimental Music Festival, \$3-\$23

VICTORY LOUNGE You May Die in the Desert, Barrows, Chrome Lakes, Slumberbox, 8:30-11 pm, \$5/\$8

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★ HAVANA Sophisticated Mama: DJ Nitty Gritty, 9 pm, free

CHAPEL PERFORMANCE

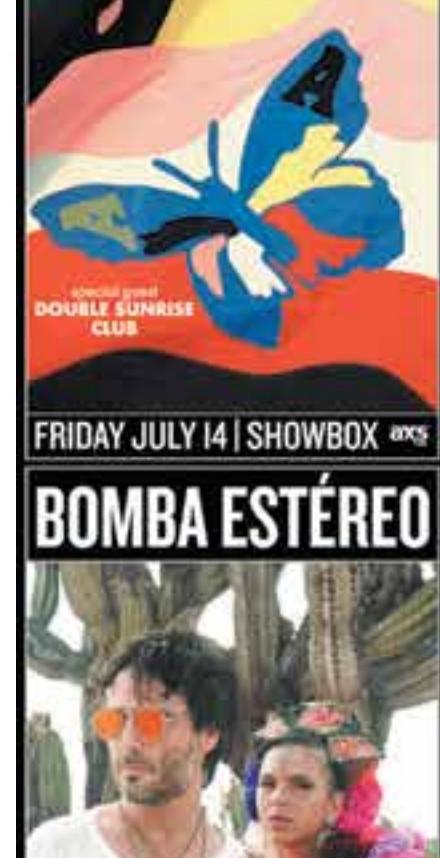
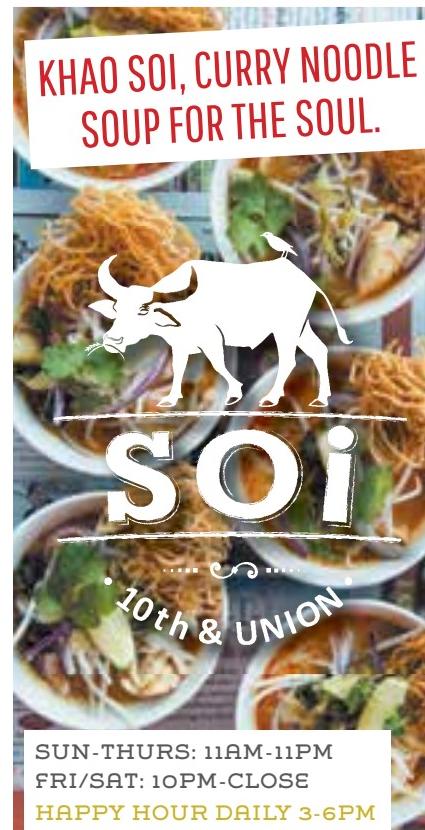
SPACE Ronan Delisle and Ryan Ferreira, 8 pm, \$13/\$15 donation

● JAZZ ALLEY Poncho Sanchez Latin Jazz Band, 9:30 pm, \$32.50

R PLACE Thirsty Thursdays: DJ Flow, 9 pm, free

TRINITY Beer Pong Thursdays: DJ Yup and Catch24, 9 pm-midnight, free

THE ROYAL ROOM Arête Quartet, 9 pm, free



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Nights at the Neptune

JUNE 30
SFC PRESENTS (EVERYTHING) CELEBRATES VIBES: THE 5TH ANNIVERSARY OF NIGHTS AT THE NEPTUNE.
Staged By: Dan Doherty
Performed By: Trevor Dunn Band - Eddie Levy - Shanna Murphy
Directed By: Michael C. Allister Dunn & The Broken Down Boys
Music By: Michael C. Allister Dunn & The Broken Down Boys
Drama by: Eddie Levy - Shanna Murphy

JULY 5
SFC & JULIE DOIRON PRESENT PROMISED LAND (Documentary)
Special Guests: Shannen Doherty, Chrissy Metz, and the Filmmakers
Directed by: Julie Doiron & Eddie Levy (Shanna Murphy)

JULY 13
SFC PRESENTS THE FUTURE OF FILM IS FEMINIST FESTIVAL.
With: Kara & Natasja & More!
Directed by: Kara & Natasja / Shanna Murphy

JULY 20
SFC & LUC GARNER PRESENT RISE LAUGH AT A TIME
Directed by: Lucy Garner / Eddie Levy / Shanna Murphy / Kara & Natasja

JULY 27
SFC & WOMEN IN FILM PRESENT INTERNATIONAL GIRL SAND EXPO
Directed by: Kara & Natasja / Eddie Levy (Shanna Murphy)
Performed by: Monique (FBI) / Kara & Natasja
Directed by: Shanna Murphy & Kara & Natasja
Directed by: Kara & Natasja / Eddie Levy

AUGUST 3
SFC & DOMINIC SAVAGE PRESENT BLACKKHNMSADICK: A JOURNEY TOWARDS LIBERATION
Directed by: Dominic Savage / Kara & Natasja / Eddie Levy / Shanna Murphy

AUGUST 10
SFC PRESENTS DON'T CALL IT A RIOT
Special Guest: Adesuwa Aighewi (Powerless)
Directed by: Kara & Natasja / Eddie Levy

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JULY 9
12-3PM AT MIKE WALLACE PARK
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Listen to your Art is a student non-profit music and arts festival held annually to benefit the Trevor Project, which raises awareness about teen suicide. This year's event will feature a variety of bands, including Lavender Country, the iconic gay country band and Babe Waves.

For more information about Listen to Your Art, check out ListentoYourArt.org!

LISTEN TO YOUR ART
MUSIC AND ARTS FESTIVAL

Re-bar
Theater & Nightclub

JUNE 2017

Re-bar celebrates Seattle Pride Week!
THUR 6/22 // 8 pm

Nark Magazine presents
FIERCE QUEEN Drag Competition
With Shitney Houston, Mona Real, and Urethra Franklin // \$12

FRI 6/23 // 7 pm
Azucar!- Queer Latinx Dance
Featuring DJ Legaspi, DJFLIRTYG, and The Wonder Twins (Julie Herrera and Christina Ortiz)
With the Seattle Women's Armwrestling Tournament! // \$10

SAT 6/24 // 10 pm
NIGHT CRUSH Featuring SISSY ELLIOTT with Riff Raff // \$20

SUN 6/25 // 10 pm
FLAMMABLE - Pride Edition
West Coast's longest running house night, with Wesley Holmes and Brian Lyons // \$10

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MON 6/26 // 7pm
COLLIDE-O-SCOPE
A picturization of the beautiful and the unusual. Carefully curated VIDEO mayhem proven to enhance leisure time and excite the senses. // \$9

TUE 6/27 // 7pm
SEATTLE POETRY SLAM
Seattle's Longest Running Weekly Show! A competition of performance poets. // \$5
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THINGS TO DO

The Best of the Rest of the Music

Without Blood, Ashen Pyre, Kihalas, 8 pm, \$6/8

HIGH DIVE American Island, Golden Idols, Wild English, The Dales, 8 pm, \$8/\$12

HIGHLINE T-ROX, Medusa Stare, L80, Shower Scum, and Jackie Hell, 9 pm-1 am

HIGHWAY 99 Duffy Bishop, 8 pm, \$20

THE KRAKEN BAR & LOUNGE Dead Bars, Acid Teeth, Boss' Daughter, Lead Fed Infants, 9 pm, \$7

LO-FI Mamma's Birthday Bash with Greg Ashley, Roselit Bone, Head Band, Restless Angels, Kildid Band, 9 pm-midnight, \$10/\$12

LUCKY LIQUOR Male Gaze, Proofs, THMC, 4 pm, \$5/\$8; Disguised As Owls, Fast & Friendly, Value Ape, 9 pm, \$5/\$8

MACHINE HOUSE BREWERY Benoit Pioulard, Bad Luck, somesurprises, Bloom Offering, 8:30 pm, \$10

MARYMOOR PARK ★ **Rebelution**, Nahko and Medicine for the People, Collie Buddz, Hirie, DJ Mackle, 5:20 pm, \$37.50

★ MUSEUM OF POP CULTURE (MOPOP) Madarak Festival, \$25

NECTAR Around The World With KEXP: KEXP Mash-Up Patio Party: DJ Kid Hops, DJ Chilly, Derek Mazzone, 9 pm, free; Day Break, 12-5 pm, free

NEPTUNE THEATRE Sunyata Records 2nd Annual Showcase of Bands: Ayron Jones, The Barrett Martin Group, Vaudeville Etiquette, Noelle Tannen & The Filthy No Nos, 8 pm, \$20.50/\$23.50

★ OLYMPIC SCULPTURE PARK Party in the Park, 7 pm-midnight, \$150-\$250

PARLIAMENT TAVERN Infinite Flux, Sower, Sabertooth: Liquid Light Show, 9 pm, \$8

THE ROYAL ROOM Soul Suite with L. Young & Band and Mr. Nyice Guy, 11 pm, \$20/\$30

SEAMONSTER 700 Saturdays, 10 pm, \$10

SHOWBOX SODO An Evening of Comedy & Music with LAXI, Mat Edgar, Moon Darling, and Local Comedians, 8:45 pm, \$12/\$15

SKYLARK CAFE & CLUB Skullbot, Greenriver Thrillers, The Grindylows, 9 pm, \$7

SLIM'S LAST CHANCE Hammerfest 2017: Del Vox, Joy Mills Band, The Crying Shame, Julien Martlew, 8 pm, \$10

★ ST. MARK'S CATHEDRAL Cathedrals XVII: Sara Watkins & Langhorne Slim, 8 pm, \$16-\$25

● STUDIO SEVEN Lynch Mob, Iron Dragon, Mom's Rocket, Antarez, 7:30 pm, \$18/\$22

SUBSTATION Lion Pincher, Jay Dlay and The Haze, Fabulous Tip, 5 pm, \$8; This Blinding Light, King Nine Will Not Return, Kaw, Mötrik, 9 pm, \$8

SUNSET TAVERN The Regrets, Roaming Herds of Buffalo, Commutes, 9 pm, \$10

TRACTOR TAVERN Chuck Ragan and Guests, 9 pm, \$20

★ VARIOUS LOCATIONS 23rd Annual Olympia Experimental Music Festival, \$3-\$23

JAZZ ★ **JAZZ ALLEY** Poncho Sanchez Latin Jazz Band, 9:30 pm, \$32.50

● PONCHO CONCERT HALL Nick Fraser, Kris Davis, and Tony Malaby, 8 pm, \$8

SEAMONSTER Jazz Brunch, Sat, noon, free; Cuba Libre,

7 pm, \$10

● **TRIPLE DOOR** Joey Jewell's Sinatra at The Sands, 10 pm, \$25

TULA'S Greta Matassa Quintet, 7:30 pm, \$18

VITO'S RESTAURANT & LOUNGE Jerry Zimmerman, 6-9 pm, free

DJ

● **AMANDINE BAKESHOP** Saturday Lounge, 2-4 pm, free

ASTOR MANOR NRG Saturdays, 10 pm-2 am, free

BALLARD LOFT DJ Saturdays: DJ Phelonous, DJ Tammy of KISS fm, and DJ Brett Michaels, 10 pm, free

BALLROOM Sinful Saturdays: DJ Ontic and Guests, 9 pm, free

BALTIC ROOM Crave Saturdays: McClaron and Swel, 10 pm

BARBOZA Hey Now! All Your Guilty Pleasures & One-Hit Wonders, 10:30 pm, free

CHOP SUEY Dance Yourself Clean: Guests, 9 pm, Free before 10pm/\$5 after 10pm

★ **CUFF** DJ Night: Rotating DJs, 10 pm-3 am, free

● **GORGE AMPHITHEATRE** Paradiso Festival: Zeds Dead, Tiesto, Yellow Claw, Troyboi, Guests, \$198-\$943

HAVANA Havana Social: Nostalgia B, Curtis, Soul One, Sean Cee, and DV One, 9 pm, \$15

MONKEY LOFT Diggin Deep: DJ Onionz, Jordan Strong, Aarta, and Guests, \$15 before 12am/ \$20 after

NEIGHBOURS Powermix: DJ Randy Schlager, 8 pm-3:59 am, \$5

PETTIROSSO Soul Glo, 10 pm-2 am, free

SARAJEVO LOUNGE European/Balkan/Greek Night: Guests

STAGE SEATTLE Vice Saturdays, 10 pm-2 am, Free before 10:45pm/\$15 after

THERAPY LOUNGE Stripes, 10 pm-2 am, \$5

TRINITY Reload Saturdays: DJs Rise Over Run, Nug, and Guests, 9 pm, free

CLASSICAL ★ **BENAROYA HALL** Mahler Symphony No. 5, 8 pm, \$37-\$122

● **RESONANCE AT SOMA TOWERS** Les Nations: A Tour of 17th-Century European Musical Styles, 7:30-9:30 pm, \$20

ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH Master Singer and Cascadian Chorale: Beloved, 7:30-9:30 pm, \$17

OPEN MIC CONOR BYRNE Open Mic for the ACLU, 7:30 pm

KAKAO Union Open Mic Night, 6:30-8:30 pm

LITTLE RED HEN Open Mic Acoustic Jam with Bodacious Billy, 4 pm, free

● **SKYLARK CAFE & CLUB** All Ages Open Mic, 3 pm, free

MON 6/26 **LIVE MUSIC** BLUE MOON TAVERN

Caveman Dave, Edmund Wayne, Joseph Hein, 9 pm, \$7

● **CAFE RACER** Racer Sessions, 7:30-11 pm, free

● **CHOP SUEY** Jacob Whitesides, 6 pm, \$25

● **EL CORAZON** Avoid with Guests, 6 pm, \$12/\$14

THE FUNHOUSE The Brevet, Limberloss, Drea Marilyn, Common Miner, 8 pm, \$8/\$10

NECTAR Far Out West, Becca Stevens, Feral Folk, 7:30 pm, \$7/\$10

SEAMONSTER Bucket of Honey, 8 pm, free; Sing It Live, 10 pm, free

SUBSTATION Witch Bottle, Samvega, Alina Ashley Nicole, 8 pm, \$8

THE MOON (BIG BLDG) Media Jeweler, DoNormaal, Lilac, Shake the Baby, 8:30-midnight

THE ROYAL ROOM Becca Stevens, 7:30 pm, \$12

SUBSTATION Symbolik, Accidentally Murdered, Born Without Blood, 9 pm, free

● **TRIPLE DOOR** School of Rock: Stop Making Sense by the Talking Heads, 7 pm, free

SUN 6/25 **LIVE MUSIC** BLUE MOON TAVERN

Caveman Dave, Edmund Wayne, Joseph Hein, 9 pm, \$7

● **CAFE RACER** Racer Sessions, 7:30-11 pm, free

● **CHOP SUEY** Jacob Whitesides, 6 pm, \$25

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MUSIC

SassyBlack Taps Into “Upbeat Heartbreak” on *New Black Swing*

BY TODD HAMM

“They call me Sassy, Ms. Black if ya nasty.”
—“Watching You”

SassyBlack wants to take you on a trip on her latest album, *New Black Swing* (out June 23). Maybe not down memory lane, but through a living exhibition of the mechanics of a gone but not forgotten era of R&B. Running from the mid-1980s through the early 1990s, new jack swing, the stylistic reference point for *New Black Swing*, stepped away from the softer love-ballad vibes of the early 1980s (think 1983 Lionel Richie or early New Edition), thickened the sexual overtones, and added the aggressive hiphop percussion that American dance floors of the time craved (think 1986 Janet Jackson or late-1980s Bell Biv DeVoe and Bobby Brown).

A themed album like *New Black Swing*—which follows up SassyBlack’s *No More Weak Dates* (2016) and *Personal Sunlight* (2015) in her post-THEESatisfaction catalog—actually seems like a natural distillation of her previously varied sound. As a producer, SassyBlack (whose real name is Catherine Harris-White) has always favored beats that sound inspired by the pre-Ableton era: echoey air-snares, synth bass, lo-fi aesthetic. In terms of production, the concept behind *New Black Swing* seems to focus, rather than limit, her expression.

“I’ve always been a fan of R&B, and

new jack swing, so I just wanted to find some time to dive into an album I’ve always wanted to do,” Harris-White says in a phone interview. The fondness shows, as a number of the tracks are spot-on new jack swing emulation (see especially “What We Gonna Do” and “Games”); in fact, they should be considered proud additions to the canon. Harris-White says she went through a period of intense close-listening to albums

by artists like Bobby Brown, Janet Jackson, Vanessa Williams, Karen White, Jody Watley, and Michael Jackson. (In an aside, Harris-White insists that Jack-

son’s *Dangerous* is definitely a new jack swing album, saying, “I don’t think people realize it is, but Teddy Riley produced quite a bit of that.”) The overall effect of *New Black Swing* is partially a tribute to the genre, but as a whole, the contemporary rhythmic construction and unmistakable vocal stylings make the album a distinctly SassyBlack product.

Though Harris-White is well-known as a singer, she decided that if she was going to do the new jack swing shtick justice, she would have to rap as well—so she did just that. “I felt like the songs would have been missing something had I not rapped,” she says. “It felt good... I do rap, but I took a break from it to focus on my singing. Plus, the songs I was making didn’t really ask for a rap, but [this time] it just felt right, and it felt cool to come

SASSYBLACK
New Black Swing
(Bandcamp)

back to it and feel stronger as a rapper than I did before.”

The process of writing the lyrics, she says, was all about getting into the R&B mind state. A prototypical R&B jam may deal with love or loss, but there should be nuance and internal conflict. “It’s heartbreak, but it’s kind of upbeat heartbreak. It’s like, ‘You left me, but I guess that’s just how it

goes, do do do’—and then scatting, and then it’s on to the next.” She adds: “I feel like a lot of R&B albums revolve around that: What’s about to go down or what you’re gonna get if you fall in love with me.” ■

SassyBlack will perform at halftime at the Seattle Storm game on Fri June 23 at KeyArena.



Superfan to Label Maker

Solar Power Compilation Shines a Light on Seattle Hiphop’s Experimental Brilliance

BY AMBER CORTES

In Seattle’s experimental hiphop scene, Shabazz Palaces and Black Constellation are just the tip of the iceberg. There’s an even deeper, exponentially expanding universe—with unconventionally creative hiphop scenes flourishing in Tacoma, Everett, South Seattle, the Central District, and Ballard. Seattle transplant and avid hiphop fan Gary Campbell formed a label, Crane City Music, as a way to keep track of it all.

Seattle transplant and avid hiphop fan Gary Campbell formed the label Crane City Music as a way to do just that. He’s releasing *Solar Power*, a 14-track compilation of local hiphop artists, including

Guayaba, JusMoni, Raven Matthews, and ZELLI. You can find the album at Spin Cycle on Capitol Hill and from the artists themselves, who will be selling it at their upcoming shows.

You started doing short reviews of albums on Instagram—almost 150 by now—focusing on Pacific Northwest hiphop, everything from Macklemore and Sir Mix-A-Lot to the latest releases from relatively undiscovered artists like Crockett King from Tacoma. How did you get into it?

I moved to Seattle from Toronto in 2013, and I went to see a show... it was THEESatisfaction, OCnotes, Kingdom Crumbs, and



GARY CAMPBELL

Sax G at Neumos. And it was just mind-opening to be exposed to this music that was going on in Seattle that I had never seen anywhere else.

So I thought it would be fun to start posting album reviews on Instagram, just sort of putting it out into the world. What I find in Seattle hiphop is that it’s a hugely fragmented scene—like there are lots of artists out there making music, but they all exist in their own little pockets. I would find as I went to shows that there was a completely different group of people at a DoNormaal show, for example, than there was at, say, a Gifted Gab show.

But as I was writing about these records on Instagram, I would see people commenting from those different groups and using Instagram as a way to discover what was going on in Seattle hiphop. And I think it’s a great way to try to democratize the scene and talk about all the amazing music that’s happening here in the city.

How did you go from super fan to label maker? And why a compilation?

People would often read my Instagram and say they wanted to hear what some of this music sounded like, because they would see the album covers and they would read my descriptions. And it seemed like this was an opportunity to put together kind of a mixtape,

like a love letter to the city.

There’s also been a long tradition of Seattle hiphop compilations. There was a whole bunch of them in the 1990s—*Do the Math*, *14 Fathoms Deep*, and *Classic Elements*, but there hasn’t been any Seattle hiphop compilations in a while. So part of it was trying to play into that legacy.

I feel like this record traps a moment in time in Seattle music, like a time capsule. This is music preserved for the future. I picture it in the way that we go through a thrift-store record bin, and we find that great jazz record from the 1960s. Maybe some kid in 2050 will dig this record out of a thrift-store bin and think it’s as amazing as I do.

What is it about this moment in Seattle hiphop that you want to capture in *Solar Power*?

There’s a really deep level of experimentation in Seattle music. You can see a lot of this music gestating, and a lot of it is a little bit weird, but it’s also extremely authentic and honest. And there’s an intimacy and an intimacy to seeing these musicians live. I think part of that is because we’re up here in the upper-left-hand corner of the country, and we have an opportunity to experiment without necessarily having the same pressures that maybe New York or Los Angeles do. ■

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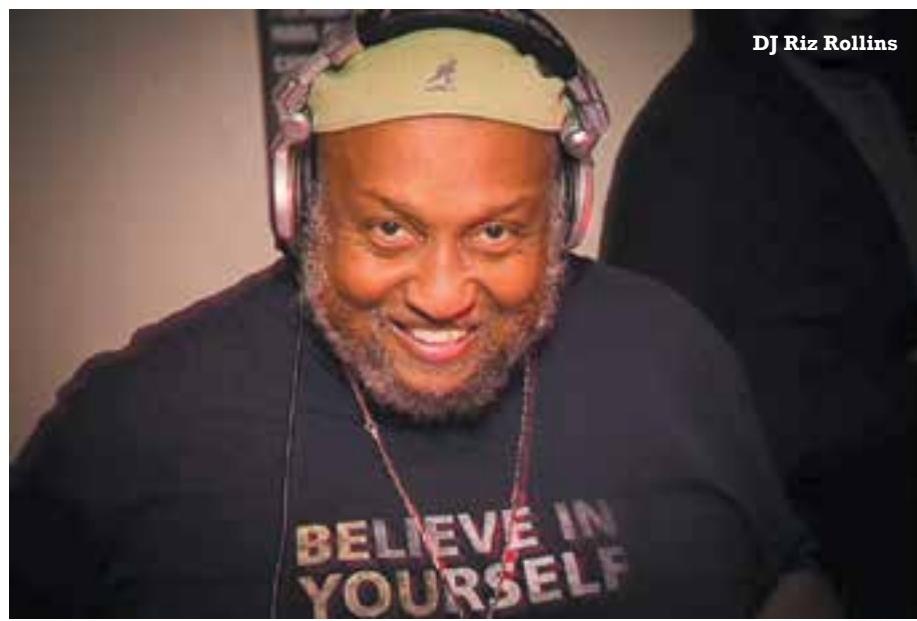
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Spun Out

Legendary Seattle DJ Riz Rollins Reveals His Favorite Tracks and Behind-the-Decks Wisdom

BY DAVE SEGAL

DJing philosophy: "I have no favorite musical styles and will try practically anything. I'm not anti-pop or neo-avant; whatever appeals to me viscerally, spiritually, or bootyfully is worth sharing with whomever dances. I don't believe that there are bad dancers, and often I'm as elated with a head nod—and a toe tap is as good as full movement. I don't mind an empty dance floor because you can never really know how music is affecting someone. I get to play what I like, and people should dance as they like. Every space is a no-shame space. Every party a no-shame party. Smokey Robinson sang, 'I got to dance to keep from crying.' I can dig that. We dance because we cannot fly. I'm just trying to help.

"[I'll even play] Kermit the Frog's 'Rainbow Connection' from *The Muppet Movie*, because every now and then a good meal is finished up with some good cheese. The first time I played this was quite by accident. At Re-bar years ago, I was playing something and didn't have enough time to mix another song, so I grabbed the soundtrack to *The Muppet Movie*, not knowing how it got in my crate. With seconds to spare, I cued this up and watched an entire club stop, take notice, and spontaneously hold hands and sing along. I had to turn around because the moment was so special it made me cry. Still does."

"The lion's share of my time in the wide public eye has been with KCMU/KEXP. As a variety show host, it's been 29 years, which leads me to say 30, 'cause 30 years in one job, any job, commands status. And since I don't have money, status is crucial. As a variety show host, it's been my privilege to explore every pertinent sound my ears can handle. And as the host of Sunday night's *Expansions* [on KEXP], I get to play music that wouldn't be welcome on a dance floor but that is necessary to mental health and well-being. It's like getting carnivores to eat their vegetables, and vegans to get their proteins and minerals, and everybody gets to have cake."

Riz Rollins's current top five tracks:

1. Tinush, "Struggle (feat. Aretha Franklin)": "[This unreleased track was] discovered during a late-night weed binge on the innerwebs."
2. LTJ Xperience feat. Joe Bataan, "Ordinary Guy"
3. Bill Withers, "The Same Love (Whiskey Barons Rework)"
4. Jill Scott, "Wanna Be Loved (Tony Nuccio's Lovely Remix)": "I love the solid edits of the bedroom and attic children mostly done with permission and all over the innerwebs."
5. Eugene Tambourine feat. Yevhen Valera, "In the Good Life"

Styles played: "As far as styles, I'm fortunate enough to throw down hiphop one night (e.g., Teairra Mari's 'No Daddy'), world beat (N.O.H.A.'s 'Balkan Hot Step' from the *Conney Island Love* compilation on Wonderwheel Recordings), house (one of the fiddy-eleven mixes of Roland Clark's 'Resist' on Fluential Records), and everything in between. James Brown's 'Cold 'Sweat' is probably the record that started it all in the days before back in the day. Shit saved my life."

Best/worst request: "It happened during a party while I was playing house music. A sister dressed to the nines in black, hair did on point, makeup on point, heels and evening bag, stepped up to me and said in an almost whisper, 'Do you have any Pantera?' When I told her I didn't, she gave me the combination downward side-eye stankface and left the club. But I do play Polkacide's 'Beer Barrel Polka' every New Year's Eve. First song of the New Year."

Upcoming events: "As Won Love with my husband and main man Rob Green, we'll be playing Seattle Alternative Pride Festival on Saturday, June 24, and Train Car House Party at the Orient Express in Sodo that same night (free). On Pride Sunday, I'll be playing alongside Larry Rose, Tim Betterley, and Alex Ruder at the KEXP Pride Party at Tilikum Place Park.

"I'm with a crew we call the 'Board of Deacons,' composed of Joey Webb, Devlin Jenkins (aka Vagabond Superstar), and Almond Brown. In the black church, the deacons are custodial, the people who get to make sure that the sick and shut-in are attended to, who set up order during services. To say that we get to play everything is kind of an understatement. We play everything that's relevant to our shared history and culture. Yup, black music, played by black men who are in conversation about our shared past and our contemporary presence, and keeping a firm eye and ear on our future. We'll be playing at Soft Option at the Monkey Loft on Saturday, July 1." ■



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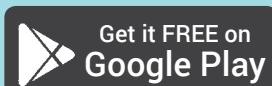


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ART

Adrien Leavitt's Photography Basks in the Beauty of Queer Bodies

BY EMILY POTRAST

Right now, the walls of Vermillion are covered with photographs of bodies. Fat bodies and thin bodies. Brown bodies and white bodies. Bodies with tattoos and bodies with scars. Gender nonconforming bodies. Each one revealing a private, interior world of vulnerability and emotion typically reserved for our most intimate moments.

The bodies are part of *Queer Feelings*, an ongoing exploration by photographer Adrien Leavitt of queerness and the intimate, complex relationship that we have with our bodies. "As a trans person and a queer person, I often feel like I don't see representations of myself in media or art," Leavitt tells me. "When I finally found representations of queer and trans people that I could relate



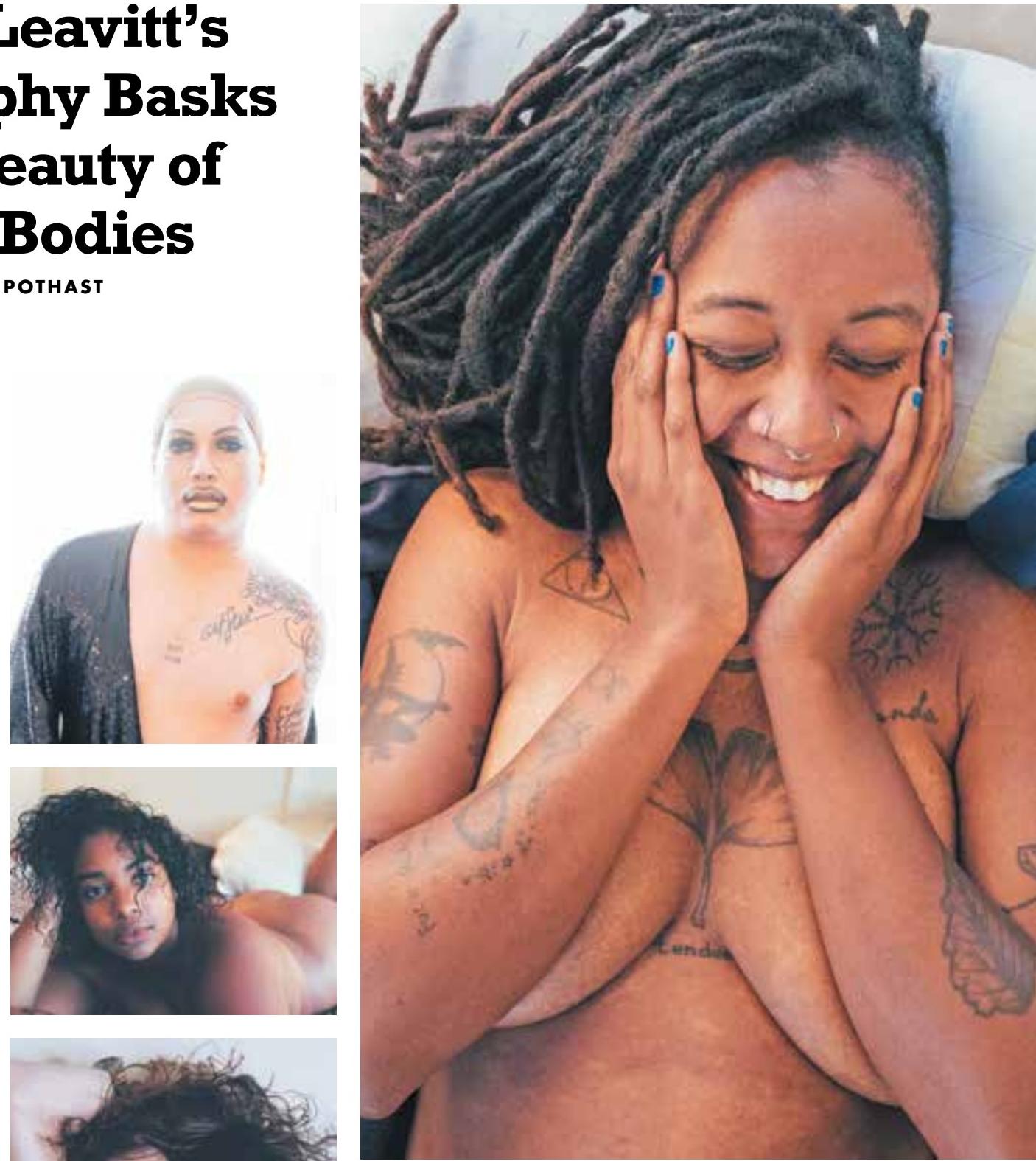
"It's about being vulnerable in a world that often rejects us."

to—that looked like me or like my community—I felt tremendously moved. With that in mind, I started exploring self-portraiture as a way of reflecting on myself and my own identity, particularly as it relates to gender."

Eventually, the self-taught photographer (who also works as an attorney for the King County Department of Public Defense) began turning his camera on other individuals who self-identify as queer—both friends and new acquaintances who have found him through open calls for models. The resulting portraits have a directness reminiscent of Catherine Opie or Zanele Muholi, but with a very sensual emphasis on warmth and tenderness. Leavitt's subjects often fill the entire frame, cropped in a way that conveys familiarity and closeness.

"The experience of photographing someone I know well is obviously different than someone who I've just met, but it amazes me how open people are to the experience and what a special connection we're able to form while we take the photographs," he tells me. That connection, fostered by Leavitt's gentle charisma, seems to be the key to capturing these moments. Standing in front of these portraits almost makes you feel like you're in bed with some of these people—in a fun, exploratory sense that feels comfortable, not objectifying. And a lot of them are smiling—genuine smiles that you can tell are captured and not posed.

Now three years into the project, Leavitt has photographed more than 50 individuals for *Queer Feelings*. As the images have evolved, so has the project statement Leavitt shares with everyone he photographs. Un-



heightens the intimacy and trust the artist has with his subjects, allowing people a safe, comfortable context for opening up.

For Leavitt, this is a very important part of the work. "Having a portrait taken, particularly a nude portrait, is a very vulnerable process for the person being photographed. That vulnerability allows a different level of visibility—a very intimate visibility. For me, queerness is about all of that.

It's about being vulnerable in a world that often rejects us or asks us to be palatable under a system that values certain types of bodies and identities, particularly white bodies, thin bodies, and gender conforming bodies."

Queer Feelings exists as a book and a website, but the experience of seeing the photos installed in a gallery provides an opportunity to encounter the figures on a human scale. "At the opening at Vermillion, I talked to so many people about their experience viewing the work in a physical space (rather than on the internet) and how it affects their sense of self," says Leavitt.

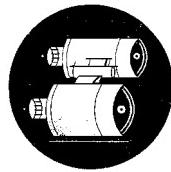
Encountering these images of bodies in a space with other bodies creates an awareness of their impact, but the book and website allow the project to reach a wider audience. "I received a note from a mom who bought the book for her queer teenager who is exploring their own gender," he smiles. "I've sent a few books overseas, too. Disseminating this body of work feels very powerful!"

In a capitalist, heteropatriarchal society, "power" is often associated with dominance, but power can also be negotiated through vulnerability, openness, and trust. Leavitt's images are powerful in the latter, queerer sense.

"I wanted to make a body of work that allowed us to see ourselves and truly bask in our beauty," says Leavitt. "For me, the experience of being seen is critical to creating a sense of self, value, power, and community."

"I hope that by creating work that actually shows queer people in an intimate way, we have the opportunity to more fully see ourselves." ■

like many photographer-model agreements, where a model gives up all rights to how their image is used in the future, participants may decide to opt out of *Queer Feelings* at any time, resulting in the removal of their images from Leavitt's website and public exhibitions. This ongoing negotiation of consent further



PERFORMANCE

Donald Byrd's Shocking (*IM*)PULSE

Spectrum Dance Theater's Response to the Pulse Nightclub Shootings Is Brutal

BY CHRISTOPHER FRIZZELLE

Donald Byrd wants to traumatize you. At the very least, the Tony Award-nominated choreographer wants you to confront the physical and emotional trauma of the gay American experience in raw, explicit, excruciating detail. Nothing about (*IM*)PULSE, Spectrum Dance Theater's response to the Pulse nightclub shootings a year ago, softens sharp edges for the audience, or makes it okay at the end.

"Some of the piece is an assault," Byrd said in an interview the day before I saw the show. "It's meant to be an assault, to shake you up a bit, to keep the audience from being complacent. Not running away from the world, but learning to sit and deal with it."

Even knowing that going in, I was not prepared for what I had to sit there and deal with. On opening night, I kept thinking, "My god, this is brutal." At one point, a performer was on the ground being shot over and over, his body pulsing and writhing; my date flinched over and over. Other times we grabbed each other's hands, or held each other; or one of us would whisper to the other "Jesus."

(*IM*)PULSE doesn't depict the largest mass shooting in modern US history, though there are abstract echoes of it. It also echoes other major traumas in its sweeping view of LGBTQ history, namely gay-bashings and the AIDS crisis. The tensions of these traumas are embodied by Spectrum's captivating dancers.

"The body is really the content, always," Byrd said. "And people don't understand how the body communicates. We live in a culture that is body illiterate, or thinks dance is entertaining. And when it's not entertaining,



(*IM*)PULSE A piece meant to challenge the audience.

NATE WATTERS

they don't know what to do with it."

The first part of the piece is entirely dance, although there is recited and recorded text by the artist David Wojnarowicz, whose writings about the politics of queerness are so charged

with rage, they practically vibrate (he died of AIDS in 1992).

There is also music by Bob Ostertag that includes recordings of protests of anti-gay legislation in San Francisco when Harvey Milk was still alive, interposed with instrumentation by Kronos Quartet and Eric Gupton.

The horror at Pulse was not just an assault

on LGBTQ people, it was an assault on people of color, and many of Spectrum's dancers are people of color. The impulse "to make people the other and then annihilate them" was one of the issues Byrd set out to address with this piece.

The second part of (*IM*)PULSE is a monologue performed by an actor on a gurney. The character has suffered brain damage from a gay bashing, and the actor switches between multiple speakers as his body absorbs the shock of what has happened. Presumably some of the speakers are characters in his head, some of them come from people who were involved in the incident, and some of them are the ones that

surround him in the hospital. This text originally began as a traditional play about a gay bashing called *Marrow* by the New York playwright Brian Quirk. Byrd, who has known Quirk for years, asked if he would be willing to transform it into text for a single character to speak; Quirk added bits of Spanish dialogue to make the character more relevant to Pulse. Craig MacArthur brings the many-voiced monologue to bristling, unsettling life onstage—with live video of his brutalized face projected onto the wall behind him. Byrd's overall intention was to "create the hallucinogenic and feverish mind of a physically traumatized person(s) struggling to make sense of a horror."

"I hope it will wake people up, and break their hearts," Quirk told me. He added that the rage of Wojnarowicz reminds him of the rage in this character. For example: "There is a section of the piece that is an enormous 'fuck you' to Trump. The character is trying to grapple with this: How can you hate another person that much? And he makes a list of things he hates, and it ends in Trump."

Byrd said that sometimes when he watches MacArthur on the gurney, "in the hospital, I know that he's been bashed, but sometimes I think it was something else." He's referring to AIDS.

Even though there's a moment toward the end that's supposed to relieve some of the pressure, it doesn't last. The worst is yet to come. I wish the masculinist white guys who voted for Trump, the people who believe gays have it easy and guns are the answer—the people who need to be shaken up—would go see this piece, but something tells me they are not the people who are going to go. ■

Nothing Matters and We're All Going to Die

But You Should See *The Realistic Joneses* Anyway

BY RICH SMITH

A random town somewhere in the American Southwest is the correct setting for playwright Will Eno's *The Realistic Joneses*, directed here by Paul Budraitis for the consistently stellar New Century Theatre Company.

The climate is life-givingly sunny but life-threateningly dry. The place is abundantly austere, organically abstract, warm but loveless. This confluence of contrasts and paradoxes reflects the general state of the world of Eno's play, which had me variously chuckling and nodding throughout the show in pained acceptance of the cosmically meaningless enterprise of human existence.

Whenever the circular saw of an existential crisis begins whirring inside my brain, I always think of these immortal lines from "Phantom Camera," the title poem from a very good book by Jaswinder Bolina: "Whatever happens here happens for a reason. It so happens / it's not a very good reason." My answer to the question those sentences evoke involves the biological imperative plus my preferred version of a line from W.H. Auden's "September 1, 1939": "We

must love one another and die."

That answer soothes me enough to get through the rest of lunch or whatever, but there's still the problem of figuring out how to "love one another." That's the challenge facing the two couples at the center of *The Realistic Joneses*.

The Joneses have a lot in common. They both, as the title suggests, have the same last name—Pony and John Jones (Brenda Joyner and Peter Dylan O'Connor), Bob and Jennifer Jones (Evan

Whitfield and Sunam Ellis). They've both moved out to the desert to work on their marriages, which are both being tested by communication issues.

Bob has recently been diagnosed with "Harriiman Leavey Syndrome," a fictional nerve disease that forces him to speak only in the most concrete of ways, sort of autistically, I guess. Jennifer has given up her job and is trying to be a good caregiver, but she struggles to figure out how to give care to someone who is so verbally careless with her feelings. John also plays the

role of the caregiver in his relationship with Pony, who self-describes as impulsive and childlike.

By afflicting Bob with a disease that renders him guileless, Eno cleverly creates a Beckett-like absurdist nightmare (aka reality) that still retains all the advantages of a realistic narrative play about marital strife.

The whole play can almost be summed up by a line O'Connor delivers in his charming and quietly heartbreaking portrayal of John. After meeting Bob and Jennifer for the first time he says: "This was fun. Not fun, but some other word."

Or maybe this line from Bob, which Whitfield delivers with hope in his voice: "I don't think anything good is going to happen to us. But what are you going to do?"

It's so hard to maintain this philosophical yet light tone and still project real human emotion at the same time, but every performer nails it in NCTC's production, which isn't such a surprise given the company's reputation for fine acting.



THE REALISTIC JONESES A Beckett-like absurdist nightmare.

So go for the good acting. Go for Andrea Bryn Bush's bold set, the unfinished quality of which reflects the unfinished nature of the marriages between the couples in the play. Go because it's cathartic to watch people wonder whether it matters to finish a sentence, or announce a feeling, or work on something as insignificant to geological history as a marriage. Go because for some reason—maybe not a very good one—it does, and plays as fresh and bizarre and linguistically inventive as this one provide some evidence of that. ■

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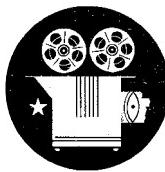
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FILM



THE BAD BATCH It's set in an arid, open-air prison colony separated from America by a chain-link fence.

Post-Apocalypse Now

Ana Lily Amirpour Discusses
The Bad Batch's Narrative Extremes

BY SEAN NELSON

The scariest thing I saw at the inaugural Overlook Film Festival, which features horror cinema from around the world, was a breathtakingly disturbing dystopian vision—all the more horrifying for its plausibility in the American present. *The Bad Batch*, written and directed by Ana Lily Amirpour, creator of the ominous revisionist vampire western noir *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*, is the first vision any artist has offered of what life might look like at the end of Donald Trump's second term.

Speaking by phone from San Francisco, Amirpour tells me that while she appreciates interest in the film, she often finds the process of discussing her work counterintuitive. "I'm good at interacting with the human race when there's a sensible way to do it," she says. "But making a film is that way for me. My work, as a filmmaker, is to make the film, which is already done. I think that's what I mean when I say counterintuitive. I might actually be good at it, too, sometimes. It's kind of like I'm just doing [interviews] to help—like in the world we live in—a very, very strange, unusual, off-the-beaten-path film."

How off the beaten path? Well...

The Bad Batch is set in an arid, open-air prison colony separated from America by a chain-link fence (I guess they couldn't afford

a wall, after all). When a young prisoner named Arlen—a member of the group that gives the film its title—is dropped off with only a bottle of water and a sandwich, we see a sign that reads "WARNING: Beyond this fence is no longer the territory of Texas. That hereafter no person within the territory beyond this fence is a resident of

the United States of America or shall be acknowledged, recognized, or governed by the laws and governing bodies therein. Good luck."

But Arlen's bad luck has only just begun. She soon learns what it means to truly be cast out from the rule of law or the acknowledgement of America's governing bodies, coming up against grotesque violence, body mutilation, a vacuous messiah figure, murder for sport, murder for survival, and, oh yeah, actual cannibalism.

The Bad Batch is about humankind at the point of either evolution or extinction. It's also about human beings being forced to eat one another. We're accustomed to seeing cannibalism portrayed as a sort of rarefied, satirical invention—Hannibal Lecter does it to express his superiority, Beatrice Dalle's character in *Trouble Every Day* does it because she has a disease that director Claire Denis associates with female lust, zombies do it because they're zombies. The people in *The Bad Batch* do it because there's simply no

other food available to them.

"When I think of the vicious behavior [of some of the characters]," says Amirpour, "it's so physically brutal and in your face. But I see people right now in the world tear each other to pieces for reasons much less easy to understand than hunger."

Throughout Arlen's desperate journey, she—and we along with her—is forced to discover new terms for human empathy, which emerges as not just a character builder, but a biological imperative. Though it may seem comforting to think of it as a wild, postapocalyptic sci-fi horror allegory, the film's motor is startlingly literal.

The survival economy within the landscape of its wall-less prison—with its equal measures of savagery and compassion, love and indifference, tribalism and anarchy—is a perfectly logical extension of the weaponized divisiveness that prevails in the here and now. The old TV show *Max Headroom* was set "20 minutes into the future." *The Bad Batch* feels a lot more immediate than that.

"It's funny to me when people say [the film] is the future or a dystopia," says Amirpour, "as though it's not something that's happening right now. It's like 'postapocalyptic'? Actually

it's kind of pre-apocalyptic. You've never been to Tent City on Skid Row [in downtown Los Angeles], the largest population of homeless people in the United States? I just think some people do a really good job of keeping in their comfort."

But as lamentable as that is, isn't it also a form of self-preservation?

"Oh, totally," Amirpour laughs. "You totally have to find it. We need to find some small corner of peace and feel good and have a laugh. You know? You only get one spin around the rock... Sometimes I do just want to escape for two hours in a story where good and bad are very clearly delineated and we can all just root for the good guy and get that satisfaction. I do love that and need that. Sometimes you can't think that hard and not have the easy answers. We all have the propensity for either extreme, and we all have a reason why we believe what we believe in life. Everyone is right in this world—that's why it's so fucked up. Because you're right, whoever you are, what you believe is right because you're you. So here we are."

The Bad Batch's most noteworthy characteristic is its genuine philosophical quandary about the state of humanity in a fractious age. If you've looked at the news in the past few years and wondered, "What fucking world am I living in?" Amirpour's film provides a very upsetting answer that rings true in the same way a nightmare does. And as the traditional systems of maintaining order continue to erode in waking life, visions like hers may not be comforting, but they do provide a certain clarity.

"Systems of politics, culture, race, economic things—they feel like Russian nesting dolls to me now," says Amirpour. "The thing that's difficult for me is understanding the other side. That's what I feel like people are bad at."

Even when, and especially when, the other side's ideas are repugnant and wrong. We see nearly every character in *The Bad Batch* perform acts of such unimaginable monstrosity that if you saw them in real life, you'd run screaming. But because of the alchemy that occurs in narrative filmmaking, and Amirpour's determination not to look away, the overarching horror of their situation allows them to become, if not sympathetic, then at least recognizably human. Like you. Again, empathy as biological imperative. Like one of those dark 3 a.m. moments when you fear that the only way we're going to survive is by learning how to genuinely feel for Jeff Sessions.

"Yes, exactly," says Amirpour. "And how do you do that in cinema and storytelling? You twist things to narrative extremes."

But at the end of those extremes, the high-art aesthetics, the familiar

genre tropes from *Mad Max* to *Battle Royale* to *Lawrence of Arabia*, and the violence, depravity, and ambiguity that binds it all together, *The Bad Batch* ends on a note of fragile, fractured optimism that forces you to reconsider everything you've just seen. It may only be a tiny, dim glimmer of hope, but in a hopeless world, it feels like grace.

"Yeah, I feel that," says Amirpour. "I do. If you're asking me am I an optimistic person, I don't know. But you go on, you know? That's probably the most inspiring thing about us as people: We go through all this heinous shit all the time, but we do go on." ■

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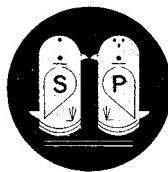
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Coming Up (and Coming Out) in the Restaurant Industry

Three Local LGBTQ Chefs and Restaurant Owners Discuss Their Experiences

BY TOBIAS COUGHLIN-BOGUE

Within the restaurant industry, kitchen culture is notorious for being a cesspool of toxic masculinity. Chefs rib each other incessantly about, as Anthony Bourdain famously put it in *Kitchen Confidential*, "who takes it in the ass." The dick-swinging aspects of kitchen work are starting to fade, especially here in progressive Seattle, but it's still a pretty aggressively heteronormative work environment.

For the Queer Issue, we caught up with a few local LGBTQ chefs for a quick chat about what it was like coming up (and coming out) in that environment, what's different now, and their hopes for kitchen culture moving forward.

JULIAN HAGOOD

Owner, Harry's Fine Foods

How long have you been in the industry?

I went to culinary school right out of high

school. I've known I wanted to be a chef my whole life. This is my first restaurant. I kind of went the backward route—I did catering for a long time.

Were you always out?

Yeah! I came out when I was 17 to my friends. I was working in my mom's coffee shop when I was like 15 or 16 and washing dishes at a country club in Spokane. Working in the restaurant industry there, I never felt pressured to hide my sexuality.

Where are things at now for queer people?

I've had trans employees, and half my employees are straight and half are gay—it's an incredible mix.

Having half your staff be queer isn't such a big deal anymore?

Not at all! If anything, while there is obviously the need to be politically correct, having

every color of the rainbow there really opens it up for jokes of all flavors.

Shit-talking in the kitchen is never going away, we're just doing it more respectfully?

Oh absolutely! Never. [Having a more diverse staff] does create a more respectful environment, and I think everybody kind of understands where everybody else is coming from.

BUDDIE PETREY

Co-Chef, Saint John's Bar & Eatery

How long have you been in the industry?

I first started working in the restaurant industry when I was 15, as a dishwasher. A really bad dishwasher.

Have you been out the entire time?

No. I didn't come out until I was 19. I came out at a restaurant I was working at in ▶

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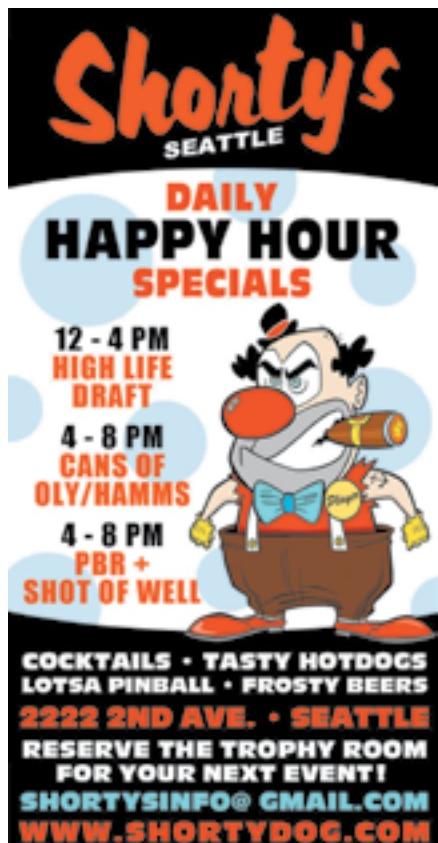


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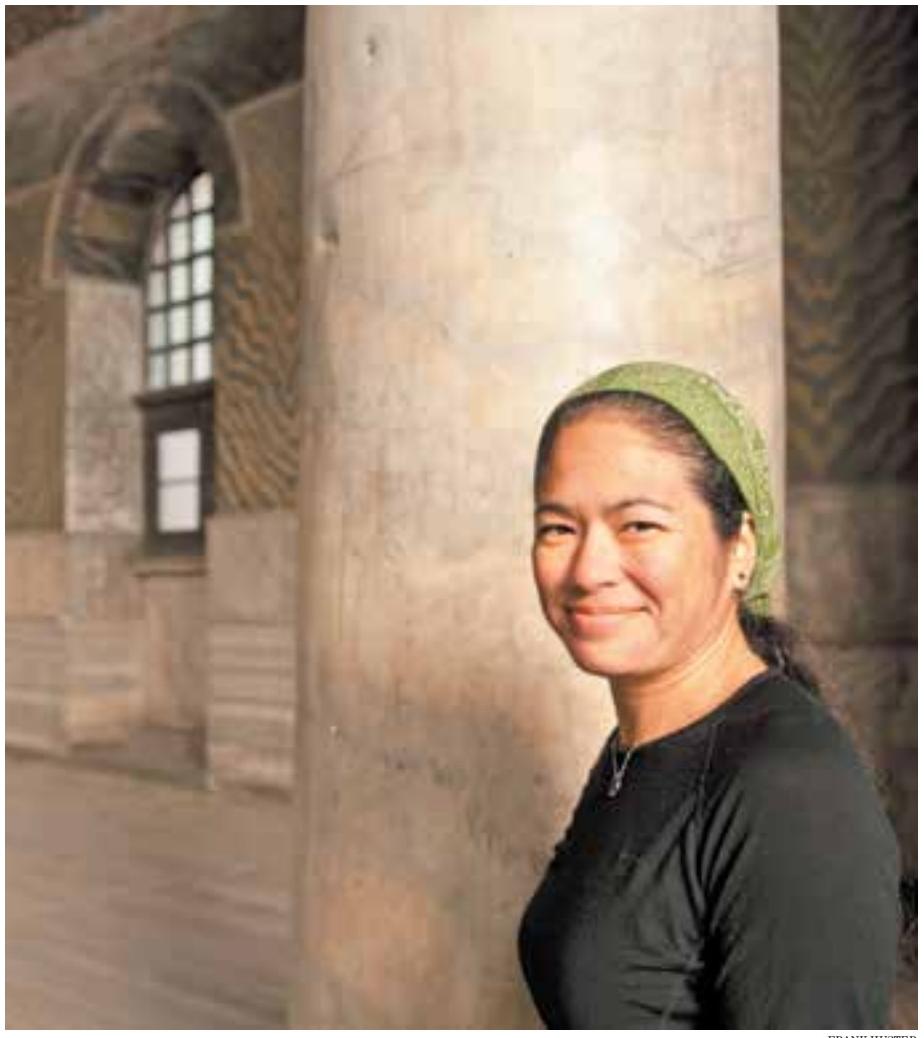
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FRANK HUSTER

What was your first job?

At Carlos Murphy's, an Irish/Mexican bar and grill behind a mall. A thousand covers a day, it was just batshit crazy. I started off in the pantry. That's the great thing about the industry, it's one of those vocations that you can get into even if you don't have experience. You can start learning your craft and getting paid at the same time, which is really nice!

Were you out when you started there?

I actually didn't find out that I was a lesbian until I was mid-18. I say "found out" like, "Oh my god! I'm gay!"

Like the clouds parted and there was a big dude with a beard who was like, "Guess what?" Did you come out to your coworkers at some point?

Yeah. I don't know how fair it is [to say it was challenging], because I grew up in Southern California and it's a very tolerant community. Lots of people hanging out on the beach, super liberal, hippie.

We have it good on the West Coast.

Of course, thanks to everyone who has paved the way for us. There's definitely a good fight that has been fought. It still goes on, but it's definitely not to the same extent.

Like we take it for granted?

We should be taking it for granted! If we're taking it for granted, it means it's not a big deal anymore. Which is where we're starting to go. We're still making monumental strides, but we're really getting to the point where it is becoming a nonissue.

Also, in kitchen culture, everyone back there is a bunch of rebels and bandits and, y'know, animals. Everyone comes in the door with their own weird shit, but everyone gets along. My wife says this—she's not from kitchens, but when I opened up Tilth, we were in the weeds all the time and she'd come help—she was like, "You guys are all like a pack of wolves back there. You all band together; it doesn't matter who's white, who's black, who's yellow, who's gay, who's straight, who's man, who's woman." It's true, the only thing that matters in the kitchen is if you can pull your weight! ■

There's no way around it.

Maybe it would be described as a micro-aggression? I don't know, but it's bad stuff. I think it's better now, but it's still there.

MARIA HINES

Owner, Tilth and Agrodolce

How long have you been in the industry?

Twenty-seven years!

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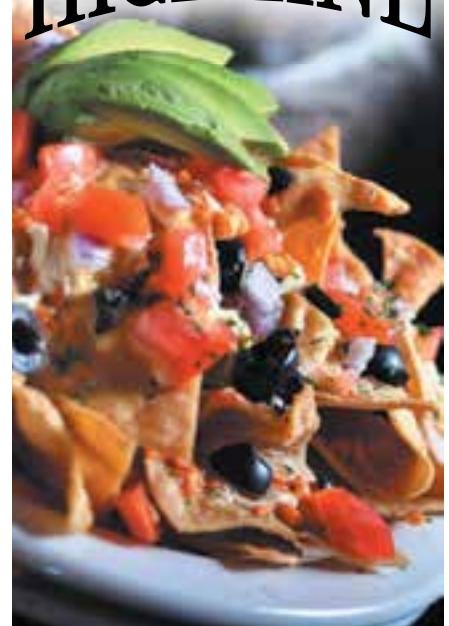
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Taste This, Seattle

Fish Toast at B-Side Cafe

BY TOBIAS COUGHLIN-BOGUE



IMAGE COURTESY OF ANALOG COFFEE/B-SIDES

As a food writer, I probably eat out too much, but I frequently find myself discovering tastes that are so revelatory and wonderful, I want everyone to know about them. Because after all, the best thing about food is sharing it with other people. In this new column (which you can find every Friday on Slog and occasionally on the pages of *The Stranger*), I'll be highlighting individual dishes or beverages that really knocked my socks off over the past week. The goal is to provide you with completely honest, unfiltered selections from my culinary wanderings.

First stop: fish toast. Analog Coffee (235 Summit Ave E) recently launched B-Side, a cafe that will soon inhabit the former Resto space below Analog. For now, you place your order at Analog and then go around the corner to wait at a small window for your food. B-Side offers three toast options—egg, fish, or sweet (all \$6)—as well as meat or vegetarian breakfast sandwiches (\$7) and some sort of healthy bowl (\$9). The breakfast sandwiches are good, but the thing you want is the fish toast.

The fish in question is delightfully flaky smoked trout, and the chef is quite generous with it. If you are one of those people who sneer at \$6 toast, this cavalcade of protein will wipe that sneer off your face. Indeed, the whole affair begins with a small but intimidating mountain of trout. This is applied on top of a layer of tangy herbed yogurt, and then topped with a lattice of pickled and fresh mandolined onions. The cold, zesty yogurt—it is the first thing that hits your tongue, after the toast itself—provides the perfect counterpoint to the pleasantly pliant mound of fish. And the acid of the onions is there to wrap the whole thing up for you with a nice, tidy bow. Flavor-wise, I found it to be perfectly integrated.

This glorious symphony is all composed upon a slab of buttered rye with exactly the right amount of char. Yes, the toast is clearly insufficient to support the mountain of flaky goodness tamped down upon it, but that's why they serve it in a paper boat and give you plenty of napkins. Anyone who claims they've never eaten the meat that falls out of the back of an overloaded taco is lying to you. And for what reason? Shame should never factor into any dining experience (with the possible exception of the TV show *Man v. Food*), and you should be similarly unashamed to pinch the stray bits that accumulate in the boat between your fingertips and savor every single perfect bite.

Leave your sense of decorum elsewhere, take your toast and coffee down to the nearby Thomas Street Mini Park, and enjoy a quiet personal moment with one of the finest eggless breakfast items our city has to offer. Just don't forget those napkins. ■

B-Side is serving from Analog Coffee on weekends from 8 am to 1 pm ("for now").

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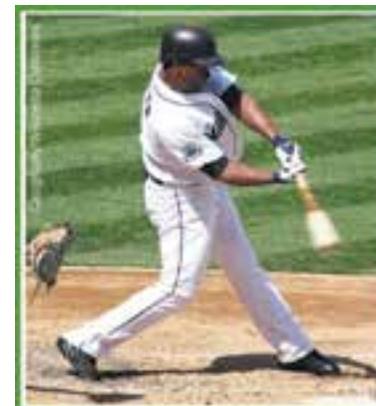
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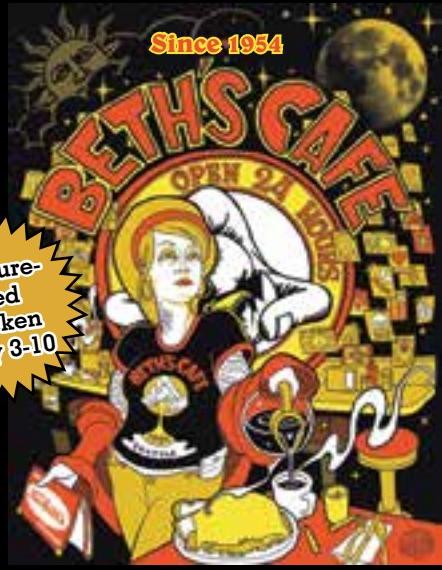
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Food & Drink News: Pride Kolsch, Herring Week, and More

BY TOBIAS COUGHLIN-BOGUE

FREMONT BREWING PUTS TWO OF THE BEST THINGS IN ONE CAN FOR PRIDE

It's Pride week, which means celebrating LGBTQ rights amid nearly nonstop drinking. To help you do both at once, Fremont Brewing presents Pride Kolsch, a light, refreshing, and perfect-for-summer lager that will raise money for LGBTQ causes (and hopefully get you pleasantly buzzed on a patio or around a fire).

The new brew will launch on June 22 with a release party and Pride Kickoff Celebration at Fremont Brewing (1050 N 34th St) featuring two special infusions from 5 to 10 p.m. Following that, it will be distributed statewide in some very pretty 16-ounce cans and will be available on draft at the brewery as well. Proceeds from the beer go to Lambert House and Ingersoll Gender Center.

From the press release: "The vision behind Pride Kolsch is to create and foster an LGBTQ community within the craft beer world, to stand up for the safety and self-determination of this community, and to ensure that everyone can be proud of who they are, who they like, and what they drink."

Hell yeah, and happy Pride!

BURDICK BREWING'S NEW TAPROOM OPEN

In other fist-pump-worthy beer news, Burdick Brewing found a new home for their taproom and it's in South Park (8520 14th Ave S). The opening was on June 17, and henceforth they'll be keep regular daily hours. The original Burdick location was deemed unfit for service due to a lack of drywall and an odd bit of health code that requires it—so I'm thrilled that my guy Max Leinbach managed to right that wrong. And that he's doing it on the booming main drag of our beloved South Park is just a sweet, sweet cherry on top.

The new spot looks kind of like every third-wave indie coffee shop in Los Angeles, but in a way that somehow straddles the neighborhood's rapid gentrification and its solidly industrial roots. Indeed, Max's design sensibility has always been one of my favorite things about his brewery (though he did have help from Kat Lawton Interiors this time around). His commitment to free wi-fi and delicious, consistently improving brews doesn't hurt, either.

ALASKA HERRING WEEK RETURNS

Alaska Herring Week—which runs now through June 25 and involves herring specials at a boatload of rad local restaurants—is now in its third year. Its 2015 launch coincided

with a story I wrote about the unfortunate disappearance of Pacific herring from the local food milieu. To encourage local providers to use more of the bounty of our nearest ocean—rather than shipping herring in from halfway across the world—Old Ballard Liquor Co. owner Lexi hit the pavement and enlisted a small cadre of local restaurants to launch Herring Week. At first, the only participant you might have recognized was the Walrus and the Carpenter. But now the list is pretty expansive, and it appears that the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute has thrown its full weight behind the event. I know it's not exactly an end to world hunger, but I am thrilled to have contributed in some small way to an effort to unfuck the fucked up and unsustainable food systems that global capitalism has created. I'm also thrilled to eat my weight in Pacific herring this week, because it's extremely tasty.

BRANDON WEAVER FTW

Liberty Bar's Brandon Weaver—who has a wonderful mane of curly hair and constantly wears funny hats atop it—won the Seattle semifinal of a United States Bartender's Guild cocktail competition. The national "Make It Exotico" tourney (unsurprisingly sponsored by Exotico tequila) will take place at the famous Tales of the Cocktail festival in New Orleans, where Weaver will represent our fair city against competitors from Nashville, Philadelphia, Denver, Portland, and Charleston. The drink he made to secure his passage was the Piñata Punch, which sounds like it makes for some pretty solid late-June drinking.

Here's the recipe:

Piñata Punch

Ingredients:

1.5 oz. Exotico Tequila Blanco
.5 oz. pineapple juice
.5 oz. lemon juice
.25 oz. green Chartreuse
.25 oz. Giffard apricot liqueur
.25 oz. honey syrup (1:1 honey and water)

Preparation:

Combine all ingredients in a cocktail shaker and shake until frosty. Strain into a coupe and garnish with offset cucumber slices on the rim of the glass.



If you don't have those ingredients lying around the house, you can probably just go to Liberty and ask him to whip it up for you, as he's a fairly congenial dude. ■

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PERSON OF INTEREST



Adé A Connére

Meet the Iconic Seattle Artist Fighting for LGBTQ+ Rights in Olympia

TEXT BY ANA SOFIA KNAUF
PHOTO BY STANTON STEPHENS

Adé A Connére is a familiar face in Seattle's queer community, "a staple of just about every gay Seattle thing worth doing," Adrian Ryan wrote in 2014. Most recently, the Denver, Colorado-born drag performer dipped their toes into a new medium: political activism.

In 2014, Connére—who is also an artist, thespian, and singer—was attacked after leaving a benefit show on Capitol Hill. Now they advocate for transgender and gender-nonconforming people in Olympia. With hate crimes on the rise and signatures gatherers working to put a new anti-trans bathroom bill, Initiative 1552, on the ballot, resilient voices like Connére's are more important than ever.

You've become a central figure in Seattle's arts scene, particularly for your work in the drag community. How has your work evolved over the years?

I started out mainly doing fringe theater and drag variety shows like Bacon Strip, which really helped me grow and figure out who I was as a performer. Now my work has changed a bit. I have gone a lot more into mixed media, and I'm becoming a bit more political. I've also really gotten into the fine-arts scene and fashion.

Can you tell us about a project you have in the works?

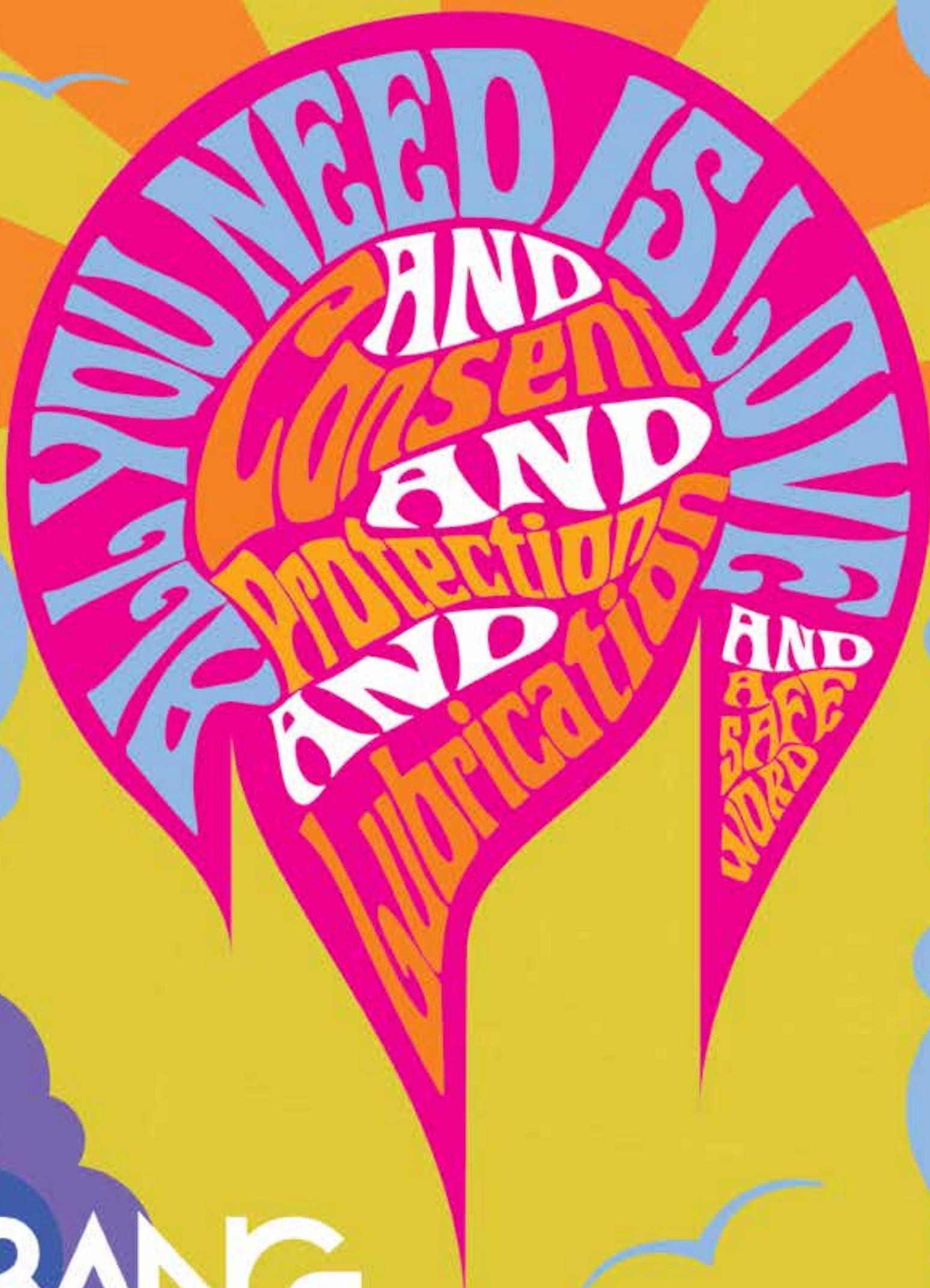
Currently I am working on the third installment of a wearable art show that I curate with my friends Anouk Rawkson and Jordan Christianson. We take artists and designers and pair them to create wearable pieces of art based on a theme. The show will be on August 10 at Vermillion.

What do you do for fun around here?

Re-bar is my playground. AzuQar, the queer Latinx dance night, is my favorite monthly night. Also Collide-O-Scope is super fun.

How do you take care of yourself when things feel bleak?

Art is what gets me through these dark times. My loved ones keep me sane. ■



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